THE ESSEX LAD

WHO BECAME ENGLAND'S GREATEST PREACHER.

MR. SPURGEON IN HIS STUDY.

THE ESSEX LAD

WHO BECAME

ENGLAND'S GREATEST PREACHER.

THE LIFE OF

CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON,

1834-1892

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

BY

J. MANTON SMITH.

WITH THIRTY-FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

BY REV. THOMAS ARMITAGE, D. D.

THE chief aim of writing and reading this book is to help young boys and girls to become as nearly like this "Essex boy" in spirit and life as can be. What he was or did sprang from his inner being, as a most godly disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ. His very heart and soul found their life not in his creed, but in his love to Jesus and in cheerfully doing what his Master bade him to do. His hand was constantly blessing some one because he loved all men, so that love with him was life. Above all things else he prayed to be as exact a copy of Christ as he could be, both as a personal Christian and a preacher of the gospel. Thus, taking Christ as his only model, his faith, his hope, and his love were bright, tender, and lively, and made all his outer life real and earnest. True work in the cause of God followed as naturally from his hands as fruit from a healthy tree or as streams from a living spring. He thought nothing of being poor or of moving in lowly circles, nothing of being meanly spoken of or wrongly treated, if men were saved by his toils and God was honored by his work. No matter how little or weak or forsaken any poor child was, he looked upon him in pity and tried in every way to lift him up. London is a great city of four millions of people, and when he saw so many thousands of children there, hungry, in rags, and homeless, his eyes melted in tears. All his powers were put forth to get them bread and clothing and homes, and after that he daily sought by every winning act to make them true Christians.

A great many people, some of them ministers and some private disciples of the Lord Jesus, wish that they were as great and as good as Mr. Spurgeon was and they are trying to copy him, but they meet with dead failure.

The very fact that they take him for a model shows that they feel that they are small and mean when they compare themselves with him. They fail, and ever will, because they only imitate his way of doing things, without the spirit, the life, and the purity which he drew from his inmost soul. Any person who tries to imitate Mr. Spurgeon will be bitterly disappointed, unless he is a real Spurgeon in character to begin with. Men may copy his faults and weaknesses, just as the scholars of Plato, without his wisdom, made humps on their shoulders because he had a crooked back; but that was all. If the young readers of this book would like to do Spurgeon's work, they must first use his constant prayer, breathe his humility, and become full of the Holy Spirit.

The Bohemians tell this story of Wenceslaus, their great king. One bitter winter's night he went barefoot to worship in a distant church. The snow and ice cut his feet in the driving storm, but as his heart was full of the love of God, he pushed on his way regardless of pain. His servant who attended him was chilled to the bone and began to faint. Then the king told him to put his feet at each tread into his footsteps. At once the servant's shame kindled his zeal, and following in his prince's tracks he walked firmly, although the blood from his feet stained the snow at every step. So Mr. Spurgeon, from a child, planted himself in the footprints of his Lord. He had Christ's life in his soul, and it was easy for him to walk in Christ's ways. He knew that he could not do Christ's work unless he had His life; then he could walk as Christ also walked. So let the young readers of this book become the same sort of youths that the "Essex lad" was, and in their measure they will repeat his life-work. In that case this great preacher, being dead, will still speak in them.

INTRODUCTION.

THE life which forms the subject of this book was, in many respects, like the Kaleidoscope, which, as children, we were so proud to purchase with our saved-up pennies when we attended the country fair held on the village green. To some of us as boys a Kaleidoscope was the greatest wonder of the world Though plain in its exterior, it had only to be put to the eye to reveal a marvellous array of beauties and colours, which fascinated and arrested our attention. Its variations were so vivid and charming, that we immediately became enamoured of it, yet its charms were all confined within the limitations of one small circle. Almost like magic the old Kaleidoscope at every touch and turn exhibited new pictures by different combinations of the same materials. The schoolboy might leave it to attend to his lessons, and older lads might be called away to perform their lawful pursuits of life, but whenever they returned to it they always found some pleasing and captivating picture awaiting them. It was like this with the life of C. H. Spurgeon, whom the Lord called even as a boy to proclaim his message to a sinful world. Deliberately restricting himself to the proclamation of a few primary truths, he yet combined them with such remarkable variety and freshness that there was always a new charm in the message which he delivered to the people.

Like Moses, for nearly forty years this faithful servant was God's chosen leader of a great company of redeemed people. No book can fully describe the marvellous power of his unique life. Under his preaching thousands of sinners were converted into saints, and afterwards lived to bring glory to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Like Abraham, he was led forth by a divine hand from

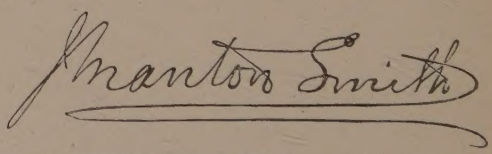
the place of his nativity to become a great father in Israel, and God used him to overthrow many idols and gain many victories.

Like David, he was endued with mighty power while yet a ruddy lad, and was able to infuse courage into the hearts and lives of many a faint-hearted soldier of Christ.

Like Samuel, he heard the Lord's voice when quite a youth, and hid nothing of the things that God had revealed to him; as he grew, he found favour both with God and with men, and "the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground."

After reading all the sketches that can be published of such a life, the verdict of those who knew the man must be the same as that of the Queen of Sheba, after she had seen the wisdom and glory of Solomon—"Behold the half was not told me."

This little volume is a new arrangement of the Kaleidoscopic materials of this varied life. It seeks to make vivid those aspects of it which are of more immediate interest to young people, in the hope that many of them may follow in the path which C. H. Spurgeon as a lad so virtuously and vigorously pursued.



AUTHOR'S NOTE.

Should this book be presented to any young person, it would be well to fill in the name of the boy or girl, in the letters on pages 134, 135 and 138, 139. As two of my own children were led to trust the Lord Jesus by means of these letters, fac-similes of the originals have been inserted in this book, with the prayerful hope that many others may obtain a similar blessing. Prayer is desired that such may be the case.

PREFACE.

An old man of eighty-two is naturally not much inclined to write a preface to a book; but as my friend Mr. Manton Smith desires me to introduce his sketch of the wonderful life and work of my son Charles, I am glad to accede to his request.

The later years of my dear son were rich in blessing, and his young days were in many respects worthy of imitation. He was always a remarkable boy, and early gave promise of future greatness. As this book is for young people, I would impress upon them to follow him in his respect and obedience to his parents, and in his love for his home.

And I would urge the mothers who may read this book to be as careful in the training of their children for Christ as was *his* saintly mother who is now in heaven. I had something to do with his up-bringing, but I was so frequently from home that more of the responsibility was thrown upon my dear wife, and with constant and prayerful thought she nobly fulfilled the task. Now she has met her dear son in glory and rejoices with him. I too shall soon join them and mingle my praises with theirs.

I cannot enough magnify the grace of God who gave me two such sons as Charles and James, and who has used them both so greatly in his service. Each of my brothers had two sons, and I had two, but only mine became preachers of the Word, following in their father's and their grandfather's footsteps. Both my dear sons have served God faithfully, and it is a great joy to me to see the younger continuing with such success the work which his brother has left. May the Lord spare him long and strengthen him greatly!

Last Friday I was able to attend the closing meeting of the Conference of the Pastors' College men, and to join them in remembering the Lord's death. I felt like a grandfather to all the brethren. for are they not my son's children? May God bless them all! My heart was made to dance for very joy as we gathered around that table. So intense were my feelings that if I had had a voice like my friend Manton Smith I would have burst forth singing a verse of Dr Watts' hymn:

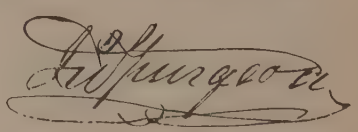
> "My willing soul would stay
> In such a frame as this,
> And sit and sing herself away
> To everlasting bliss."

My cup is full; I am an old man now, but I still need the same Saviour as much as ever I did, to save me from my sins. Jesus Christ is everything to me. I have preached the Gospel for many years and I do not want another. In the faith of it I have lived, and in the faith of it I shall die. My father's God is mine; He is my sons' God too, and my grandsons are following in the same path

Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.

May God bless this book and its author and all who may read its pages. So prays—

The honoured father of his honoured son,



DUMFRIES VILLA,
WEST CROYDON,
9th May, 1892.

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CHAPTER I.

About Grandfathers.

HAVE you ever been in a prison?

I can quite fancy that some of my young readers will think this is a queer question to begin a book with. But then there is a reason for starting there, which you will find out presently.

We must remember that the prison-house is not necessarily a disgrace to anyone. It is the crime which takes people there that disgraces them, not the prison. He who goes into prison with a good character may leave it even better than when he entered, especially if he suffers for conscience sake.

Joseph, who knew the Lord in his youth, was cast into the Egyptian prison; but it only proved for him a passage to the king's palace. Peter, the bold preacher, was thrust into prison because it pleased the people; but God sent a new and unknown warder to unloose his chains, and bring him forth to a prayer-meeting while the soldiers in charge of him were still sleeping within the gaol. Paul and Silas, two evangelists sent forth by God, were also put in prison; but their songs at midnight enabled them to forget their sufferings, and through their preaching the gaoler and all his family were converted, and were afterwards

baptized. John Bunyan, the Bedford tinker, was sent to gaol for preaching the gospel ; but while imprisoned he wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which we all love so much.

But I want now to tell you of another noble man who was cast into prison. In the year 1677, there lay in Chelmsford gaol for fifteen weeks, for conscience sake, a godly old man named Job. He only had a pallet of straw to lie upon, though the weather was bitterly cold. Like his namesake, Job the patriarch, he was patient while suffering for truth and for God. This good man's surname was Spurgeon, and he was the great-grandfather of the great-grandfather of the late C. H. Spurgeon, whose father is also a great-grandfather, because Mr. Spurgeon, before he was called away to heaven, was himself a grandfather.

Now, I wonder if my young readers could count how many fathers that makes altogether to succeed Job Spurgeon. When you have quite finished your lessons for school to-morrow, just oblige me by sitting down, and working this out.

This family of Spurgeon was descended from Dutch forefathers, who fled from Holland for refuge from the Duke of Alva, when he cruelly persecuted the saints of God in that country during the sixteenth century. Though unknown to fame at that time, the Spurgeons stuck like leeches to the gospel for which they had left their native soil, and lived and died in the faith which lightens life, and which brightens death

James Spurgeon, who was the Independent minister at Stambourne, was the grandfather of the Essex lad

who became England's Greatest Preacher. He was what is called a Calvinist, which means that he held and preached the truth in the same way as Calvin

MR. SPURGEON'S GRANDFATHER.

did in Geneva many years ago. He was a preacher of considerable ability, and continued to preach until he was 88 years old. Just fancy you see the

old man, yonder he comes down the quiet village, wearing a dress cravat, a frilled shirt, and with very deep pockets in his waistcoat, which usually contained a packet of sweets for the children. With his knee breeches, silk stockings, and the bright buckles on his shoes, he must have looked a very venerable old gentleman indeed. So he lived out a life of usefulness amidst his flock, and on his death-bed he talked more cheerfully than many do in robust health. He realized the nearness and preciousness of Christ to such an extent that he comforted all that were around him, till he quietly fell asleep on the bosom of Jesus.

His grandson and namesake, Pastor James A. Spurgeon, the esteemed brother of the great man whom this book is about, who is still with us, gave at the Pastors' College Conference, 1892, some reminiscences of the grand old man. He said: "My grandfather was one of the most earnest preachers that I have ever known, and was very much honoured in the district where he lived. He had a magnificent voice. I remember him giving me the first notion of a joke. My grandfather was of the family build, and someone said to him,

"'Mr. Spurgeon, how much do you weigh?'

"'Well,' he said, 'that will all depend upon where you take me. If weighed in the balances, I am afraid I should be found wanting; but in the pulpit they tell me that I am heavy enough.'

"There followed a ripple of laughter, and in my youthful mind I wondered what they were laughing at. I began to think, and then there dawned upon me a second meaning, and, as if I had been born

across the Tweed, some time afterwards I laughed too. That was my first joke; I did not know that there was such a thing in the world before that. It is very pleasant to remember that my grandfather could poke a little fun at his own expense. I have heard his grandson do it since."

The old Manse of Stambourne, in which he lived, was large, but not lofty; eight windows were to be

THE OLD MANSE, STAMBOURNE.

seen in the front, but, as the Irishman says, only four of them were visible; the others were blocked up with plaster, to save the absurd window-tax which was levied in those days. The entrance-hall was bigger than many modern parlours; it had a brick floor, which was carefully and constantly sprinkled with fresh sand. It was a bonnie house for a boy to live in; there was plenty of room for him to run about, and the pantry and larder, the dairy and cheese-room, the

bedrooms and box-room, gave plenty of scope to youthful energy; so that a boy, if such there had been, might have had continual change within the walls of the old Stambourne parsonage. There was, in fact, just such a boy, who often roamed over the roomy dwelling, and of his birth we are going to speak in the next chapter. I hope it will not be such a sleepy chapter as this.

MR. SPURGEON'S GRANDMOTHER.

CHAPTER II.

About a Baby.

THE old village clock in Kelvedon had scarcely struck the hour of four in the morning on the 19th of June, 1834, when lo! there came the first peep of day piercing through the tall poplar trees which surround this secluded hamlet. Suddenly, as if at the magic stroke of a conductor's batôn, there pealed forth a mighty chorus of praise from hundreds of little winged creatures who all night had been hidden away in their warm, cosy nests, and now awakened to greet the new day, until the air was vocal with their songs. But before that day's sun had set, and before the little songsters had chanted their evening praise, there was another cry heard in the little village of Kelvedon, not perhaps so musical to some ears as that of the blackbirds: yet it was a sound which declared that a new life had that day been given by God to the world. What a life it has proved to be, eternity alone will reveal!

There were no bells rung on earth because this child had been born in Kelvedon; but the mother's heart was made to leap for joy at the thought of God's goodness to her, and the godly father also rejoiced and praised his Maker for the gift that day bestowed:

though little did the father or mother know what future joy awaited them by means of the life just entrusted to their care. Surely that day the angels above would sing their songs of praise because a new voice was heard on earth—a voice which would soon become like a trumpet-call for Christ the Lord,

In the tidy cottage in the village dwelt the godly

MR. SPURGEON'S BIRTHPLACE, KELVEDON, ESSEX.

father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. John Spurgeon, and their new God-given treasure. Happily they were both well acquainted with the good old Guide-book; it had proved for many years a lamp unto their feet, and a light unto their path; they had read many times from this inspired Word, words addressed to another, but which they might now well apply to themselves:—"Take this child away, and nurse it for

me, and I will give thee thy wages." It was for the preciousness of these sayings of this Book of books that their own ancestors had endured persecution; and we can well imagine them reading with new unction such a passage as this: "Whoso shall receive one such little child in My name receiveth Me."

Thus it came to pass that in a small house, which is still standing in the obscure country village of Kelvedon, the first year of the life of the boy who was named CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON was spent. At his death, nearly fifty-eight years afterwards, he was pronounced by Archdeacon Sinclair, from the pulpit of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, to have been "England's Greatest Living Preacher."

ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL.

CHAPTER III.

A Little Boy in a Big House.

WHEN chubby little Charlie, as his dear Aunt Ann possibly called him, was ten months old, his father and mother removed from Kelvedon to Colchester; and about four months after that date, Mr. and Mrs. James Spurgeon, of Stambourne, went over to Colchester to visit their son and daughter and see their little grandson. When they saw him they took such a liking to the plump little fellow, that they persuaded the father and mother to allow him to return with them to Stambourne, assuring them that they would only be too pleased to have the entire charge of him, and to care for his welfare. So it was arranged that the boy should go, and for the next few years his aunt and his grandfather and grandmother were entrusted with his training; and right well did they see to it. Charlie was the first grandson in their family, and you know what a fuss grandfathers and grandmothers always make of such a boy. The child, eighteen months old, was thus early in life transplanted from the town house to the country; and he remained with his grandparents until he was between five and six years old.

Seeing so much of this Essex lad's early life was spent at Stambourne, it may be well to give a description of the place.

The village is an entirely agricultural one, having no manufactures nor any large business premises of

any kind. The population is between four and five hundred, and there are about one hundred and five cottages in it. There is only one blacksmith, one shoemaker, and two or three carpenters, in the whole village; and there is neither doctor, chemist, butcher, nor policeman within three miles.

The pretty old Church is quietly situated by the roadside, surrounded by some fine trees, which give it

STAMBOURNE CHURCH.

a very picturesque and attractive appearance. The little boy must often have looked with admiration on its massive tower, and perhaps have climbed to the top of it to get a view of the surrounding country.

There is also in the village a Congregational Chapel, which stands near the minister's residence. It has a good burial-ground, and also stables and sheds for the horses and vehicles of those members of the

congregation who drive in from a distance. It is shaded by lofty chestnut trees and limes, which, when covered with blossom in the spring, together with an abundance of lilacs, laburnum, and the flowers of the minister's garden, make up a very charming scene. It is a lively spot on Sabbath-days, as troops of children flock to the Sunday-school, and others congregate from the hamlets around.

In the hall of the grandfather's old house there stood a fine big rocking-horse, so safe that on it even a Member of Parliament might have been sure he could keep his seat. On the back of this fine grey charger young Spurgeon must have been rocked for many an hour by his devoted aunt.

In the front of the house, half secluded by a large shrub, there was a room which delighted the little boy, for the mangle was kept there, and this magic machine did duty for the whole parish. Many a short ride would Master Charlie get on the top of the mangle while the villagers were pressing their clothes. In this same room the kneading-trough was kept, and on the shelf beside it in the corner of the room there was always "*something nice for the boy*," placed within reach of his tiny hand.

The dairy was another place where the young child used often to go, and here he frequently, to his great delight, obtained a cheesecake and a draught of new milk.

Even on rainy days he found great delight at the old Manse, for at the front door the rain ran off the roof of the porch into a tub underneath, and after he had watched the drops dripping to his heart's content, the little genius used to float cotton reels, like

tiny ships, on this miniature sea. Long after he had grown to be a man, he preached a beautiful sermon on the text, "There go the ships" (I wonder could you find this text in your Bible?), but his first lessons in navigation were learned at his grandfather's door.

The stables and sheds at the back of the Manse were fine places for play. Every gig was mounted in its turn, and its merits proclaimed by the minister's young grandson, but never on Sunday, for that day was kept very sacredly at the Old Manse.

The cupboard under the stairs was a grand hiding-place for him, and often he would dig over and over the sand which was kept there for sprinkling the brick floors. With such heaps of sand, boys are always willing to lend a hand.

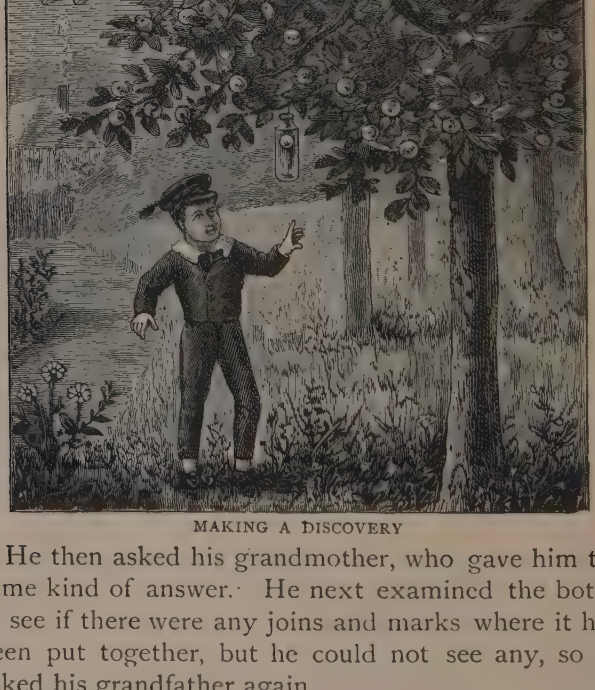
But, perhaps, the most charming room of the house was the best parlour, on the right-hand side of the front door. Outside the window there grew a fine large rose-tree. Its fragrance filled the room when the windows were opened, and as the window-frames did not fit very well, its beautiful and gentle life found its way right into the room, and sent its green leaves and new buds into the house, as if to say, "I am come to help furnish your best parlour, and save you the trouble of gathering the flowers." That was very nice, was it not?

On the mantel-shelf in this room there also stood a bottle, which, for a long time, was a standing wonder to this little boy. The boy saw that it contained a large apple, but how the apple could

have got inside the bottle he could not understand. You may be sure that he was not satisfied until he found out the secret.

So one day he said, "How did the apple get inside the bottle, grandfather?"

"Find out," said the old man. And the boy could get nothing more from his grandfather.



MAKING A DISCOVERY

He then asked his grandmother, who gave him the same kind of answer. He next examined the bottle to see if there were any joins and marks where it had been put together, but he could not see any, so he asked his grandfather again.

His grandfather still said, "Find out."

When quite alone, he put on his grandmother's

spectacles, and looked carefully into the bottle to see if the apple had been put in in sections; but no, it was quite whole.

One day, however, he walked down his grandfather's garden, and saw a bottle tied on to one of the branches of an apple-tree, and a tiny little apple growing at the end of the branch inside the bottle. He had now discovered the secret, and ran into the house, saying,—

"Now I know how that big apple got into that bottle on the shelf; *it grew inside.*"

I fancy I see his dear old grandfather taking the little boy on to his knee, and feeling quite proud to think he had discovered the secret himself. He would then, no doubt, seek to impress some spiritual lesson upon him, and to fix it in his memory by telling him that the cold frost might come and nip some of the other apples, but this one was safe, because it was inside the bottle.

"Now, Charlie, my dear," he might have said, "I want you always to remember that the Sunday-school and the Church are like this bottle: they shield many who enter them while they are young from a cruel, cold world, and from many blasts of temptation."

Another day, the grandfather would take the little boy on his knee and tell him how a good, godly man named Havers, who used to live in Stambourne, was persecuted for his religion, and that one day, receiving friendly warning of an intended attempt to apprehend him, and finding men were on his track, he took refuge in a malt-house, and crept into the empty kiln, where he lay down. Immediately

after, he saw a spider lower itself across the narrow entrance by which he had got in, thus fixing the first line of what was soon wrought into a large and beautiful web. The weaver and the web, placed directly between him and the light, were very conspicuous. He was so much struck with the skill and diligence of the spider, and so much absorbed in watching her work, that he forgot his own danger. By the time the network was completed, crossing and re-crossing the mouth of the kiln in every direction, his pursuers came into the malt-house to search for him. He noted their steps, and listened to their cruel words while they looked about. Then they came close to the kiln, and he overheard one say to another: "It's no use to look in *there;* the old villain can never be there: *look at that spider's web; he could never have got in there without breaking it.*" Without further search they went to seek elsewhere, and he escaped safely out of their hands.

By such incidents as these, amid the scenes where they took place, the mind of the boy would be much impressed.

But very soon after he had discovered how the apple got into the bottle, and had listened to such wise words from his grandfather, he returned home to his parents at Colchester for a time. Here he attended a private school for little boys, kept by Mrs. Cook, a captain's wife. I need not tell you that it was not the Captain Cook who first sailed round the world, but another. Here he made rapid progress in his lessons, and after school hours he used to play with his little brother James, whom God had given to his father and mother while he was at Stambourne.

CHAPTER IV.

The Essex Lad in the Essex Village.

WHEN young Spurgeon was called home to Colchester to commence his education, he continued to pay frequent and prolonged visits to his grandfather and grandmother at Stambourne.

It was during these periodical visits that his grandmother offered him a farthing each for every hymn he could correctly repeat to her from memory. At once he set to work, and so quickly did he learn them that his grandmother said:

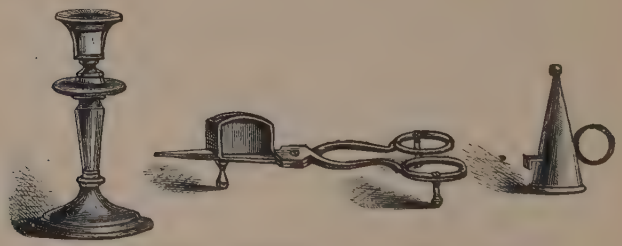
"Charlie, I see danger of becoming bankrupt, and I must reduce the price to a penny a dozen." Even at this price he committed to memory almost the whole of Dr. Watts' hymns.

But a sudden stop came to his hymn-learning. His grandfather, being annoyed by the rats from a neighbouring farm, offered his young grandson a shilling a dozen for all the rats he could catch. Down went the hymn book, and the boy's attention was henceforth devoted to the rats, until he caught so many that, for a boy, he got quite rich. Serving grandfather in this way seemed to pay the best at the time, but in after years he said that his grandmother's hymns at a farthing a dozen were a far more

profitable investment than his grandfather's rats at a shilling.

When you read his sermons, as I hope you will often do, you will notice how aptly he was able to quote verses of hymns in them, and how interesting this makes them. In most cases these are from the hymns he learnt for his grandmother. A mine of wealth was stored up in his memory in this way.

He once said to me, "No matter on what subject I preach, I can even now, in the middle of any sermon, quote some verse of a hymn in harmony with the subject; the hymns have remained with me, while those old rats for years have passed away, and the shillings I earned by them have been spent long ago."

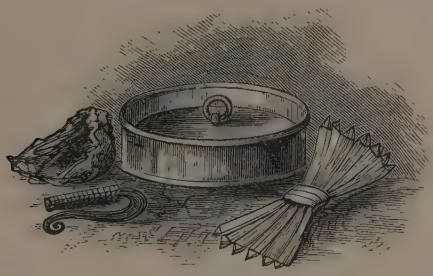


CANDLESTICK, SNUFFERS, AND EXTINGUISHER.

And in times of sickness he was often comforted in his mature years by the hymns he learnt in his boyhood days.

The room in the Stambourne Manse, where they sat at night, was not a well lighted place; for candles, being costly, were used with care in those days. Many and many a time did young Spurgeon sit on the floor silently reading a big book, by the aid of the fire-light, while his grandfather was busy preparing

his sermon, with the rush-light flickering on his small desk. The snuffers were an important article of furniture which always accompanied candles in those days. Sometimes the snuffing operation was performed by little Charlie himself, and now and then he would snuff the light a little too low, and leave his poor grandfather in the dark, while the good-natured old gentleman had to feel about for the flint and steel with which to re-light his tall tallow candle.

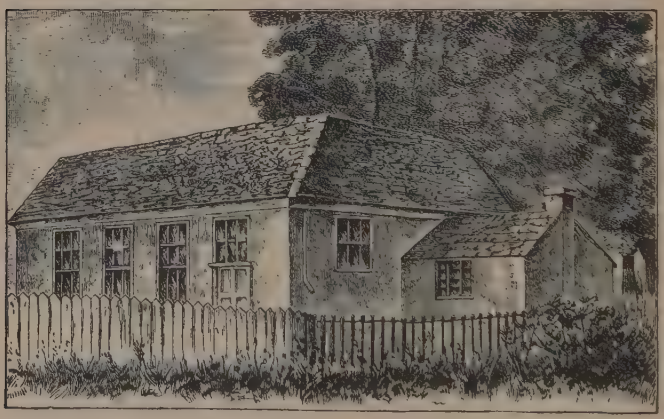


FLINT AND STEEL, TINDER-BOX AND TINDER.

On one occasion the boy hung a pound of these candles over the clothes-horse, in front of a blazing fire, and when what he had done was discovered, there remained nothing of the candles but a mass of tallow on the floor, and the dripping wicks hanging where the candles had been. In after years, Mr. Spurgeon used this incident as an illustration in a popular lecture which he gave, having all sorts of lights and lamps around him on the platform, and which is now published in a little book full of pictures, entitled *Sermons in Candles.* Anyone who wants to know more about it, can find it in that book.

A dark room at the top of the house, was the favourite haunt of the studious boy. Although it was

a dark den, it contained books, and this made it like a gold mine to Master Charlie. Therein was the promise fulfilled: "I will give thee treasures of darkness." It was here he "first struck up acquaintance with the martyrs, and specially with 'Old Bonner' who burned them; next with Bunyan and his 'Pilgrim'; and further on, with the great masters of Scriptural theology, with whom no moderns are worthy to be named in the same day."



THE OLD MEETING-HOUSE.

Even the old editions of their works, with their margins and old-fashioned notes, were precious to him. It was easy for him to tell a real Puritan book, by its shape, and by the appearance of the type. Many of the books were quaintly bound, and some "wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins." But all was fish that came to his net. He devoured the book whatever might be its appearance. His love of reading was a very prominent point in his character.

The old meeting-house was a memorable place. Mr. Spurgeon, when a boy made a drawing of it, and here it is on the opposite page.

The pulpit was a very quaint structure; over it hung a huge sounding board. It often concerned little Charlie to think what would become of his grandfather if the top should drop down during service time.

At the back of the pulpit there was a peg to hold the minister's hat. Just below the pulpit was the big square pew, called the table pew; it was paved with gravestones, and altogether it looked a very imposing place. It was from this semi-sacred region that the hymns and notices were announced. There were several square pews in the chapel, very roomy, lined with green baize and furnished with brass rods and curtains.

The aisles were paved with bricks, and sprinkled with sand.

On one side of the pulpit there were two big doors, which would allow a wheeled vehicle to pass through, and they were often opened for this purpose. The shafts of the carriage would be turned up out of the way, while the sick or infirm person remained comfortably seated in it. It was no uncommon thing to see the long carriage whips brought by the worshippers standing erect in the corners of the pews. Mr. Spurgeon's father has told me, that frequently he has counted twenty-six different vehicles packed into the sheds connected with the place at one time, belonging to friends who had come in from a distance to attend the service.

Mr. Spurgeon, when describing this chapel of his

childhood, says :—"The gallery went along the whole inside front of the meeting-house, and turned round a little way on each side. It was to me, as a child, an elevated, obscure, and unknown region. There were men with flutes who let the water run out at the ends of the tubes on the people below, and the clarionet man, for whom I had more esteem, because I could make some sort of noise when I blew through his instrument; but the fifes (why not fives?) always baffled me. The bassoon man was there, and the serpent, and the double-bass, and a lot more of them. THEY COULD PLAY. There's no mistake about it. At least, it was almost as certain as that other undeniable fact, that *our singers could sing*. Well, it was hearty singing; and say what you like, it's the heart in the singing which is the life of the business. Besides those who could sing, we had about twice as many who could neither play nor sing; but excelled in sharply criticizing what was done by others.

"I cannot forget the big clock which had a face outside the chapel as well as one inside. When his long body had been newly grained, he seemed a very suitable piece of furniture for a nice, clean, old-fashioned Puritan meeting-house.

"Outside the Meeting, near that long side, which was really the front, there stood a horsing-block. Ladies went up the steps, and found themselves on a platform of the same height as their horse's back. It was a commendable invention : how often have I wished for something of the sort when I have had to climb my Rosinante!

"To me this horsing-block was dear for quite another reason The grand old lime trees shed their

leaves in profusion, and when these were swept up, the old chapel-keeper would ram a large quantity of them under the horsing-block. When I had pulled out about as many as fitted my size, I could creep in; and there lie hidden beyond fear of discovery.

"My friend, Mr. Manton Smith, has written a book called 'Stray Leaves'; and another which he has entitled 'More Stray Leaves'; I entered into his work before he was born. So good was the hiding, that it remained a marvel where 'the child' could be. The child would get alone; but where he went to, his guardian angels knew, but none on earth could tell.

"Only a little while ago, my dear old aunt Ann said, 'But, Charles, where did you get to when you were such a little child? We used to look everywhere for you, but we never found you till you came walking in all by yourself.'

"The horsing-block was the usual haunt when there were leaves, and an old tomb would serve at other times. No, I did not get into the grave; but it had a sort of altar tomb above it, and one of the side stones would move easily, so that I could get inside, and then by setting the slab of stone back again I was enclosed in a sort of large box where nobody would dream of looking for me.

"I went to the aforesaid tomb to show my aunt my hiding-place; but the raised altar was gone, and the top of it, with the name of the deceased thereon, was laid flat on the ground. Some of the side stones, which formerly held up the memorial, were used to make door-steps when the buildings were put into their present state of repair, and the top stone was

made to occupy the same space, only it lay flat upon the ground instead of being raised some two feet above it. Still, I remembered well the place, and what the tomb had formerly been.

"How often have I listened to the good people calling me by my name! I heard their feet close to my den, but I was wicked enough still to be 'lost,' though the time for meals was gone. Dreaming of days to come befell me every now and then as a child, and to be quite alone was my boyish heaven.

"The prayer-meetings during the week were always kept up; but at certain seasons of the year grandfather and a few old women were all that could be relied upon.

"It occurred to me, in riper years, to ask my venerated relative how the singing was maintained.

"'Why, grandfather,' said I, 'we always sang, and yet you don't know any tunes, and certainly the old ladies didn't.'

"'Why, child,' said he, 'there's one Common metre tune which is all,' 'Hum Ha, Hum Ha,' 'and I could manage that very well.'

"'But how if it happened to be a Long or Short metre hymn?'

"'Why, then I either put in more Hum Ha's, or else I left some out; but we managed to praise the Lord.'"

The godly wife of the minister of Stambourne, was everything that a minister's wife should be; she studied her husband's comfort as well as the general good of the people in the village, and did much before she died towards the training of her dear little grandson.

It was always her delight to give him pleasure, and whenever her husband had arranged to visit the Squire's house to take tea with him, which was not an unfrequent occurrence, she generally managed somehow for her grandson to accompany him. Their usual custom at such tea-parties was to indulge in sugared bread and butter. The grown-up men considered this a luxury, and although the sugar was very brown she knew Charlie would be delighted, for this was quite in accordance with his taste. I daresay some of you young people would not have objected to join the party had you been alive at the time.

There were three special points in the life of Mrs James Spurgeon, of Stambourne, that early fixed themselves in the memory of her grandson Charlie, and these were her kindness, her love, and her piety. He made up his mind to imitate her in all three, and these characteristics became more intensified in his life as he grew into years. May every grandmother who may read this life be known and remembered by the same good qualities!

At length one night the aged wife passed to her reward. She died sitting up in bed with her finger on a verse in the book of Job: "The hand of God hath touched me," and from this text was preached her funeral sermon. It was a fit close to a lovely life.

One of the privileges of the little grandson while visiting at the Stambourne Manse was to be allowed to read the Scriptures at family prayers.

Once upon a time when reading the passage in the Book of Revelation which mentions the bottomless pit, he paused and said,

"'Grandpa, what can this mean?'

"The answer was kind but unsatisfactory: 'Pooh, pooh, child, go on!'

"The child intended, however, to have an explanation, and therefore selected the same chapter morning after morning, Sunday included, and always halted at the same verse to repeat the enquiry.

"At length the venerable patriarch capitulated at discretion by saying, 'Well, dear, what is it that puzzles you?'

"Now, the child had often seen baskets with very frail bottoms, which in course of wear became bottomless, and allowed the fruit placed therein to fall upon the ground. Here, then, was the puzzle with which he rather startled the propriety of family worship.

"'Grandfather,' he said, 'If the pit has no bottom, where will all the people fall to who drop out at its lower end?'

"No sufficient answer being given, the difficulty had to be laid aside for explanation at a more convenient season.

"Questions of the like simple and natural character would frequently break up into paragraphs the family Bible reading, and had there not been a world of love and license allowed to the inquisitive reader, he would soon have been deposed from his office. As it was," says Mr. Spurgeon in relating the incident, "the Scriptures were not very badly rendered, and were probably quite as interesting as if they had not been interspersed with original and curious enquiries."

CHAPTER V.

A Remarkable Prophecy.

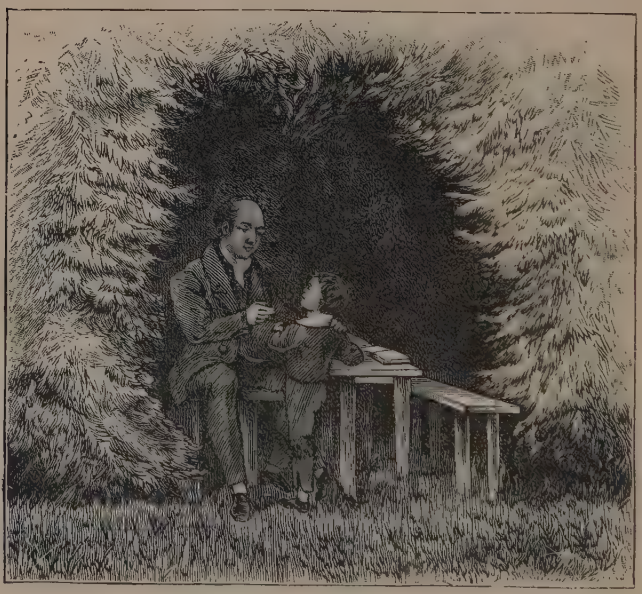
WHILE spending a summer vacation at his grandfather's, when he was ten years old, an incident occurred which had a material influence on the boy at the time, and perhaps helped to mould his future life. It occurred during a visit which the Rev. Richard Knill paid to the Essex village. Here is the story in Mr. Spurgeon's own words, as given in *Memories of Stambourne*:—

"Mr. Knill took the county of Essex in the year 1844, and traversed the region from town to town, as a deputation for the London Missionary Society. In the course of that journey he spent a little time at Stambourne Parsonage. In his heart burned the true missionary spirit, for he sought the souls of young and old, whenever they came in his way. He was a great soul-winner, and he soon spied out the boy.

"He said to me, 'Where do you sleep? for I want to call you up in the morning.'

"I showed him my little room, and he took good note of it. At six o'clock he called me up. There stood in my grandfather's garden two arbours made of yew trees, cut into sugar-loaf fashion. We went into the right-hand arbour, and there, in the sweetest

way, he told me of the love of Jesus, and of the blessedness of trusting in Him and loving Him in our childhood. With many a story he preached Christ to me, and told me how good God had been to him; and then he prayed that I might know the Lord and serve Him. He knelt down in the arbour, and prayed



MR. KNILL AND THE BOY SPURGEON IN THE YEW ARBOUR.

for me with his arms about my neck. He did not seem content unless I kept with him in the interval between the services and he heard my childish talk with patient love.

"On Monday morning he did as on the Sabbath, and again on Tuesday. Three times he taught me

and prayed with me, and before he had to leave, my grandfather had come back from the place where he had gone to preach, and all the family were gathered to morning prayer. Then, in the presence of them all, Mr. Knill took me on his knee, and said :—

"'This child will one day preach the gospel, and he will preach it to great multitudes. I am persuaded that he will preach in the chapel of Rowland Hill, where (I think he said) I am now the minister.'

"He spoke very solemnly, and called upon all present to witness what he said. Then he gave me sixpence as a reward if I would learn the hymn

> 'God moves in a mysterious way,
> His wonders to perform.'

I was made to promise that when I preached in Rowland Hill's Chapel that hymn should be sung. Think of that as a promise from a child!

"Would it ever be other than an idle dream?

"Years flew by.

"After I had begun for some little time to preach in London, Dr. Alexander Fletcher was engaged to deliver the annual sermon to children in Surrey Chapel; but as he was taken ill, I was asked in a hurry to preach to the children in his stead.

"'Yes,' I replied, 'I will, if you will allow the children to sing, "God moves in a mysterious way." I have made a promise long ago that so that should be sung.'

"And so it was: I preached in Rowland Hill's Chapel, and the hymn was sung. My emotions on that occasion I cannot describe, for the word of the Lord's servant was fulfilled.

"Still I fancy that Surrey was not the chapel which Mr. Knill intended.

"How was I to go to the country chapel?

"All unsought by me, the minister at Wotton-under-Edge, which was Mr. Hill's summer residence, invited me to preach there. I went on the condition that the congregation should sing, 'God moves in a mysterious way'—which was also done. To me it was a very wonderful thing, and I no more understood at that time how it came to pass than I understand to-day why the Lord should be so gracious to me."

This is a very remarkable incident. Of course, we all cannot expect to have our future course in life told so plainly. God hides from us what is going to happen, but He has prepared a plan for all our lives; the Bible says that "the steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord." So, though we may not know the future, we may be guided in it, if only we will trust the Lord Jesus, whom Mr. Spurgeon trusted, and whose truth he preached for so many years.

CHAPTER VI.

Home and School.

AT Colchester, there was now quite a little group of children to cheer the father and mother, and help to make the home bright.

Through the kindness of two of Mr. Spurgeon's sisters, I have been privileged to get an extra peep into the family circle, and to glean something of the spirit of their childhood days.

Charles H. Spurgeon was admitted by all his friends to be a little king in the home, his straightforwardness as a boy was very marked, and his brother and sisters trusted him implicitly. He seemed born to organize. This was seen in the way he neatly covered the books of the family, and numbered them, appointing one of the sisters librarian. A little garden having been allotted to each of the children by their father, brother Charlie was looked upon as the inspector and general overseer, and reported to his father which plot he considered to be the best kept, and most worthy of reward.

One of their delights as children, was to sit round the fireside at night, and repeat in their turn, in alphabetical order, a verse of a hymn. Brother Charlie could with ease, commence with A and go through the alphabet, but his little sister was always pleased when they arrived at the letter *N*. She knew that

Charlie's favourite verse began with that letter, and she would always ask that he should say it, even if it did not come quite in his turn. She did this because in reciting the third line, he always lifted up his finger at the word *point*, and this pleased them all greatly. The verse ran as follows :—

> "Now will I tell to sinners round,
> What a dear Saviour I have found ;
> *I'll point* to Thy redeeming blood,
> And say, Behold the way to God."

It will thus be seen that very early he shadowed forth his future career. His life-work was still to point to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

Twice during these early days he wrote a little book, containing an original poem and an article on "PASSING EVENTS." He also compiled another book, which he called "SCRAPS OF MISSIONARY NEWS." This was in fact quite a miniature magazine. He frequently gave his brother and sisters little lectures on Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," and "Holy War," and delivered them with such gusto that the children listened with eager delight.

His conduct, as a child, in the sanctuary, was the subject of general remark, and even before his conversion, his reverence for good things, and his love for good men was very great.

After a visit from Mr. Williams the missionary, who stayed a short time at his father's house, and who was brutally killed afterwards in the South Seas, he remarked to his sister, "I wish I had half his love for God and the heathen." When he heard of his death at Erromanga, he said, "I know, dear sister, the

gate of Heaven was opened very wide for him; Mr. Williams will be in Heaven a shining one for ever, for he has turned many to righteousness."

His nature was so unselfish, that he would give all he had to others, scarcely thinking of himself, and he never lost the generous spirit of those early days.

The love of reading which he had, and to which we have already referred, sometimes caused him to forget other little duties, which he should have remembered, but his regret afterwards was very great. He had a wonderful desire for solid and instructive books, but read he must; indeed, it is on record, that later on in life, he read all the books in the Maidstone library.

His father has told me that he never saw in his life such a boy for books. "In fact," said he, "Charlie did nothing else all his life, but busy himself with books; he never amused himself like other boys. James was full of fun and frolic, keeping rabbits, chickens, guinea pigs, flying kites, digging in the garden, sawing wood, hammering nails, making windmills, and cutting out boats; but Charlie was always buried in books."

His brother bears the same testimony. He says, "Whilst I was busy here and there, interfering with anything and everything that a boy could touch, he kept to books, and you could not get him away from study. But although he had nothing to do with other things, he could have told you all about them, because he used to read about everything, and read with a memory as tenacious as a vice and capacious as a barn. I can recall his studying, and how he used to be delighted to give me the benefit of what he had

been reading. I acquired a good deal of second-hand knowledge, and I think it did us both good that he should learn and then impart. He began it very early. He certainly began to be a tutor as far back as I can remember. He made such progress in his studies that I am quite sure that there were few young men anywhere of his age, at his time, that were his equals, and I think I do not know any that were his superiors."

On one occasion he had a book entitled "Spanish Bullfights," lent him by an unwise friend, and was punished by his parents for reading it; he told one of his sisters (speaking like some old man) that it was a good thing he had been so chastened.

"I should like to be able to forget even the half I read in that book," he said, "but I cannot! it sticks to me like glue. Bad books," he added "are terrible things."

His reverence for his father and mother was very great, and his godly mother's influence was one of the true secrets of his great success in after life. His love for his mother made him something like that boy who said, "I know that is true, for mother said so; and whatever my mother says is true; even if it isn't true. It is true, if mother says it."

Speaking a year or two before he fell asleep in Jesus, he said, "When I was a boy, I never doubted what my father believed. And when I was under the influence of my grandfather, who taught me the Word of God, I was such a little simpleton, that I never set up my judgment against his. I find that very small boys are not now so foolish; I wish they were wise enough to be as foolish as I was!

"When I grew up I never suspected a doctrine

because my father believed it. No, my leaning went the other way ; and if my godly father found peace and comfort in a word, I thought that what was good for him was good for his son. I was foolish enough to lean on the words of my elders in this way, and somehow, though others often think that such a course is folly, I am glad that it was so.

"I thank God, too, that my sons were as foolish as their father; and that what their father believed had an attraction for them. I hope that they judged for themselves, as I also tried to do, when I came to riper years ; but, at the first, it was the words of my parents that led me to Christ. What I knew of the elements of the gospel I received largely, without a question, from them, and I do not think it was an ill bequest."

A characteristic incident occurred shortly after he once came home from Stambourne. His grandfather had taught him always to do *what he thought to be right*. When therefore he went to the service of the sanctuary, and the people did not repeat the last line of the hymn, as he had been accustomed to hear it rendered at Stambourne, he insisted upon doing it himself, to the disturbance of the congregation. He remarked in subsequent years that it would have been much wiser, and better, if his grandfather had told him, as a little boy, *to do what his parents thought to be right*. But thus early in life he asserted the right to private judgment. He soon found, however, that little boys are not always the best judges of what is right and what is wrong, and he learned to look for guidance to his father and mother, who knew so much better than he did in many things.

His first school was, you remember, conducted by a lady, and while the lad was at this school an incident occurred which proved a life-long lesson to him ; it is pithily related by himself in *John Ploughman's Talk:*

"When I was a very small boy, in pinafores, and went to a woman's school, it so happened that I wanted a stick of slate pencil, and had no money to buy it with. I was afraid of being scolded for losing my pencils so often, for I was a real careless little fellow, and so did not dare to ask at home ; what then was I to do?

"There was a little shop in the place, where nuts, and tops, and cakes, and balls were sold by old Mrs. Dearson, and sometimes I had seen boys and girls get trusted by the old lady. I argued with myself that Christmas was coming, and that somebody or other would be sure to give me a penny then, and perhaps even a whole silver sixpence. I would therefore go into debt for a stick of slate pencil, and be sure to pay at Christmas. I did not feel easy about it, but still I screwed my courage up and went into the shop.

"One farthing was the amount, and as I had never owed anything before, and my credit was good, the pencil was handed over by the kind dame, and *I was in debt.*

"It did not please me much, and I felt as if I had done wrong, but I little knew how soon I should smart for it. How my father came to hear of this little stroke of business I never knew, but some little bird or other whistled it to him, and he was very soon down upon me in right earnest. God bless him for it ; he was a sensible man, and none of your

children spoilers; he did not intend to bring up his children to speculate, and play at what big rogues call financing, and therefore he knocked my getting into debt on the head at once, and no mistake.

"He gave me a very powerful lecture upon getting into debt, and how like it was to stealing, and upon the way in which people were ruined by it; and how a boy who would owe a farthing, might one day owe a hundred pounds, and get into prison, and bring his family into disgrace. It was a lecture, indeed; I think I can hear it now, and can feel my ears tingling at the recollection of it.

"Then I was marched off to the shop like a deserter marched into barracks, crying bitterly all down the street, and feeling dreadfully ashamed, because I thought everybody knew I was in debt. The farthing was paid amid many solemn warnings, and the poor debtor was set free, like a bird let out of a cage.

"How sweet it felt to be out of debt! How did my little heart vow and declare that nothing should ever tempt me into debt again! It was a fine lesson, and I have never forgotten it. If all boys were inoculated with the same doctrine when they were young, it would be as good as a fortune to them, and save them waggon-loads of trouble in after life. God bless my father, say I, and send a breed of such fathers into old England to save her from being eaten up with villainy."

So deeply was the horror of debt implanted in him by this incident, that during his after life he shunned it as he would have avoided the plague. Even when he built the Tabernacle he would not go into debt, and it was not opened until every penny was paid.

I hope all those who read these pages may take this to heart, and "owe no man anything, but love to one another."

After a short time under Mrs. Cook's tuition it was deemed advisable to remove Charlie to a school which was kept by Mr. Henry Lewis, of Stockwell House, Colchester; here he made rapid progress, and soon stood at the top of the class. For some time he retained this place, but there came a time when he gradually gravitated downwards till he was quite at the bottom.

This was a matter of great astonishment to his teacher who knew his abilities, especially as he did not seem to make any great effort to regain the position he had lost. He seemed, in fact, quite content to be considered the dunce of the class, and to remain at the foot of it.

One day it dawned on his teacher that the top of the class was next to a draughty door, and the bottom of the class close to a warm stove; and thinking perhaps this had something to do with young Spurgeon's strange loss of ambition, he altered the order of the class, making the bottom the top, and the top the bottom.

So Master Charlie, being last of all, was compelled to stand next to the draughty door. Not for long, however. When he saw that now merit in the class meant personal comfort, he displayed such diligence that he soon regained his position, and in a short time he was found standing beside the warm stove again; and in that place of worth and warmth he kept till he left the school.

Some people have imagined that Mr. Spurgeon was

a man of meagre education, but this is quite a mistake. Mr. James Spurgeon bears witness that both he and his brother received the best Non-conformist education it was possible at that time to get. Their father pinched himself to give it to them.

Mr. Cheveley, of Harrogate, who was a schoolfellow of theirs, bears witness to the same effect. He says :—"Stockwell House, Colchester, where Charles Haddon Spurgeon was being educated from the age of eleven to fifteen, was a thoroughly good middle-class classical and commercial school. Mr. Henry Lewis, the principal, was a man whose literary attainments were of a superior order, and for years he was assisted by a very scholarly man in the person of Mr. Leeding."

I may perhaps be allowed to interrupt this letter, and say here that Mr. Spurgeon, in after years, took the greatest interest in his former assistant master, whose death occurred only very recently.

"Mr. Leeding was the classical and mathematical tutor; his teaching was very thorough, and in Charles Spurgeon he possessed a pupil of a very receptive mind, especially with Latin and Euclid. I remember well that in both of these subjects he was very advanced, so that he left Stockwell House a thoroughly well-educated youth ; in fact, quite as much so as it was possible for him to attain outside the Universities."

So far advanced was he that when his school-master was commissioned to compile the tables for a certain Life Assurance Society, he gave the work to Charles Spurgeon to do, and the tables of that Society, even to the present day, are the handiwork of him who afterwards became the Pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle.

A few years ago, one who now stands very high at the English Bar, told one of Mr. Spurgeon's sisters, that the help her brother Charles gave him with his Latin, after school hours, was the cause of his present success in life. But her brother, as far as she knew, had never mentioned to anyone the assistance he had rendered to his schoolmate.

Early in the year 1848 the two brothers were sent by their father to complete their studies at All Saints Agricultural College, Maidstone, which was conducted by a Mr. Walker. There they remained until Charlie was appointed as a junior teacher in Mr. Swindell's school at Newmarket. According to his father's diary he started from Colchester, accompanied by his godly mother, on the 17th August, 1849, being then in his fifteenth year. When he thus left his home, for what we may call his real start alone in life, his father wrote in his diary, beneath the date, "The Lord go with him, and keep him and bless him." Very abundantly has that prayer been answered.

MR. SPURGEON'S MOTHER.

CHAPTER VII.

The Siege at Artillery Lane.

BUT now we turn from his mental education to ask about the state of this young man's heart. We have already seen his reverence for good things and his longing after the best life, but as his studies advanced his soul became unsettled, until he seemed for a time to lose faith even in his father's religion. We shall best understand his state at this time by giving an account of it in his own brilliant words, as recorded in one of his sermons. Speaking of a free thinker, he remarks :—

"I, too, have been like him. There was an evil hour in which I dipped the anchor of my faith : I cut the cable of my belief: I no longer moored myself hard by the coast of Revelation : I allowed my vessel to drift before the wind, and thus started on the voyage of infidelity. I said to Reason, 'Be thou my captain'; I said to my own brain, 'Be thou my rudder'; and I started on my mad voyage. Thank God it is all over now ; but I will tell you its brief history ; it was one hurried sailing over the tempestuous ocean of free thought."

From doubting some things he came to question everything, even his own existence. But at length

there came a day when he conquered those extremes to which Satan often drives the sinner who is really repenting of his sins.

Mr. Spurgeon's father was at this time an Independent minister, and lived at Colchester, preaching every Sunday at Tollesbury, a small village within driving distance of the town. It was while C. H. Spurgeon was home from Newmarket for the Christmas holidays that he experienced the great spiritual change of his life, and became a new man in Christ Jesus.

Of his state at this time, he gave the following account in his two thousandth printed sermon:—

"Years ago, when I was a youth, the burden of my sin was exceedingly heavy upon me. I had fallen into no gross vices, and should not have been regarded by any one as being specially a transgressor; but I regarded myself as such, and I had good reason for so doing. My conscience was sensitive because it was enlightened; and I judged that, having had a godly father, and a praying mother, and having been trained in the ways of piety, I had sinned against much light, and consequently there was a greater degree of guilt in my sin than in that of others who were my youthful associates, but had not enjoyed my advantages.

"I could not enjoy the sports of youth, for I felt that I had done violence to my conscience. I would seek my chamber, and there sit alone, read my Bible, and pray for forgiveness; but peace did not come to me. Books such as Baxter's 'Call to the Unconverted,' and Doddridge's 'Rise and Progress,' I read over and over again. Early in the morning I would awake, and read the most earnest religious books I could find, desiring to be eased of my burden of sin. I was not

always thus dull, but at times my misery of soul was very great. The words of the weeping prophet and of Job were such as suited my mournful case. I would have chosen death rather than life. I tried to do as well as I could, and to behave myself aright ; but in my own judgment I grew worse and worse. I felt more and more despondent. I attended every place of worship within my reach, but I heard nothing which gave me lasting comfort."

It had been his custom, when at home with other members of the family, usually to accompany his father, but on one Sunday, during the month of January, 1850, it was so stormy, that Mrs. Spurgeon would not allow Charles to go so far, but advised him to attend some place of worship in the town. His unrest of heart had, as we have seen, set him visiting all the places round about to see if he could find peace somewhere. On this Sunday morning he found his way into a little Primitive Methodist Chapel, in Colchester, which he had never entered before, and which he did not even know was in existence till that moment. The preacher that day was a local man, pale as death and as thin as a skeleton, who during the week worked at digging and planting cabbages, and on Sundays occasionally occupied the pulpit in the little sanctuary.

On account of the snow and the storm there were but few people present on this particular morning ; indeed so sparse was the congregation that the preacher debated in his own mind whether it was worth while to deliver an address at all, and even said "I don't think I'll preach this morning." Better judgment however prevailed, and he was led by God's Holy

Spirit to direct the attention of the few people who were there, to that well-known verse in Isaiah xlv. 22, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."

The preacher, fixing his eyes upon the stranger under the gallery, and at the same time pointing with his finger to him, said, by way of application to his text: "There is a young man under the left hand gallery, who is very miserable. He will find no peace till he looks to Jesus. Young man, you seem to be in trouble. Look to Jesus, and you will get rid of it. Look, look, look!" Again he cried "Look, look, young man, Look."

That instant his youthful hearer saw that salvation was not of himself, and the look of faith to Christ's finished work brought salvation to his soul. The burden he had carried for weeks and months fell from him, and he was enabled to rejoice in Christ immediately. Such an overflowing joy came over him that he felt he could have stood up there and then, and cried "Hallelujah! Glory be to God, I am delivered from the burden of my sin."

Little did anyone realize what a work for God and for eternity had been done that day. Perhaps the preacher went home discouraged. But in the records on high, it was noted that a chosen vessel to bear grace to millions had that morning been found and claimed. The siege in Artillery Lane Chapel had ended in a victory.

The audience during that service, resembled Philip's audience in the desert of Gaza, in some respects. There were few in number; there was, at least, one attentive hearer; there was one anxious enquirer and

one convert, who not only went on his way rejoicing, but who soon confessed the Christ he had received.

In the evening of the same day, the young believer attended the Baptist Chapel, at Colchester, in company with his mother, and heard a sermon on the text, "Accepted in the Beloved." This was made a great blessing to him, leading him to see the full provision made for his every need in Christ, and added to his *experience* of the morning, the *assurance* which comes of a whole-hearted trust in the Son of God as the Saviour of the soul.

After family worship that evening, Charles was reminded by his father that it was bedtime; but he did not seem inclined to retire.

His heart was full.

A second time his father said,

"Come, come boys, it is time to go to bed."

Instead, however, of attempting to move, his son said,—

"Father, I should like to speak to you alone."

When the others had gone, he unburdened his heart to his father, and they talked almost till midnight. The boy spoke of the morning sermon, and said, that the way of salvation was made so clear to him, that he could doubt no longer.

"I seemed then to understand," he said, "that Jesus bore my sins in His own body on the tree, and to-night I find that in Christ I am truly accepted before God. This is a blessed Sabbath for me, father," he added, "for I have found pardon, peace and assurance in Christ."

Father and son prayed and praised God together, and only those parents who have experienced the joy

of hearing from their children's lips the confession of Christ as Lord and Saviour, can enter into the joy of that father's heart that night.

On October 11th, 1864, Mr. Spurgeon, whose fame had in the interval become world-wide, preached a sermon to about five hundred hearers, in the chapel in which he was converted at Colchester, on the occasion of the anniversary of that place of worship. He took for his text the memorable words in Isaiah, which had led him into the light, and said,—

"That text I heard preached from in this chapel, when the Lord converted me."

And pointing to a seat on the left hand, under the gallery, he said, "I was sitting in that pew when I was converted." This honest confession produced a thrilling effect upon the congregation, and very much endeared the successful pastor to many hearts.

In the year 1880, referring to his conversion, Mr. Spurgeon said, "Many days have passed since then, but my faith has held me up, and compelled me to tell out the story of free grace and dying love. I can truly say,—

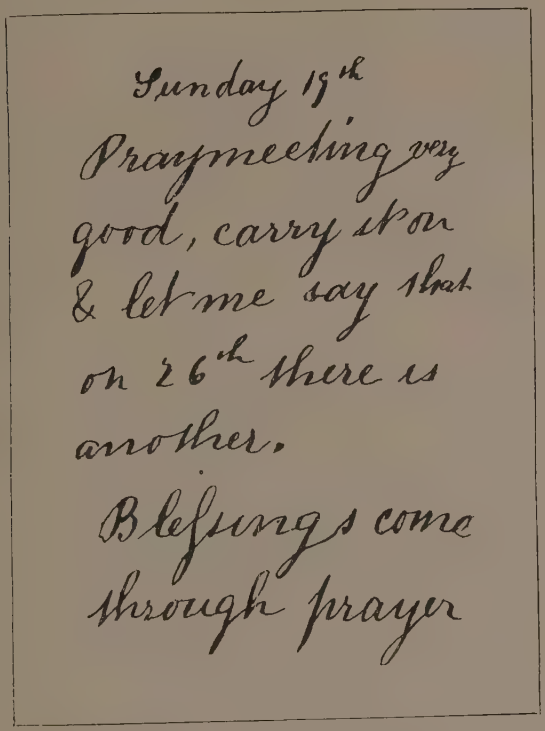
> "E'er since by faith I saw the stream,
> Thy flowing wounds supply,
> Redeeming love has been my theme,
> And shall be till I die."

This was the verse which he was accustomed to write in albums, and it was abundantly true of him, all his life long.

Some years ago my dear friends, Rev. V. J. Charlesworth and Mr. Chamberlain, accompanied a choir of the Stockwell Orphanage boys to Colchester. In the evening while conversing with their hostess,

she informed them that she had known Charles Haddon Spurgeon when he was quite a little boy.

"I have a curiosity to show you," she said, "and I prize it very much."


Sunday 13th
Prayermeeting very
good, carry it on
& let me say that
on 26th there is
another.
Blessings come
through prayer

A FAC-SIMILE PAGE OF "JUVENILE MAGAZINE."

When it was produced, it proved to be a tiny manuscript magazine which he had kept of the "Home Juvenile Society," and it was written in a

clear, round hand. In one place there was a lamentation, because some of his schoolmates seemed to be falling away from grace ; in another he had recorded his sorrow because the prayer meetings were so badly attended ; various illustrations and extracts completed the sixteen pages which it contained. A *fac-simile* penny reproduction of this interesting memento has been issued by Mr. Barton, of St. George's Road, Southwark, and by his courtesy I am able to reproduce a page the exact size of the original, which will show Mr. Spurgeon's early zeal for prayer. Many friends will wish to possess the whole of this *bijou* publication, as it is the very first available thing which Mr. Spurgeon wrote. It was written when he was not quite twelve years of age.

My friends also paid a visit to Artillery Lane Chapel, and found the carpenters busily engaged taking down the old pulpit, in which the minister stood on that memorable Sunday morning, in order to replace it by a platform. Mr. Charlesworth, with his usual sagacity, soon secured the old pulpit, as a relic of the past, and in due time, it was transferred to the Stockwell Orphanage, and placed in the girls' play-hall. Visitors to that institution may still see there that memorial of by-gone days.

CHAPTER VIII.

A New Man at Newmarket.

NOT long after the great change of heart had taken place, the young Christian was deprived of the daily counsel of his father and mother, having to return to his new sphere. At Newmarket he devoted himself closely to his studies; he gave every satisfaction, and soon became a great favourite in the school.

Having the sunlight of God in his soul he determined to keep the light bright by active service for his Lord and Master. He therefore set about helping others in every possible way. The Sunday-school became his great delight, and he gained his way into the homes of his scholars by calling to teach them writing: like a diligent disciple of Christ he took care that the very copies he set them should have the gospel in them.

The principal of the school where he was engaged at Newmarket was a Baptist, and there is little doubt that this fact had some share in turning the thoughts of the junior usher to the subject of confessing Christ in the way of that denomination. At any rate, in a few months young Spurgeon, having well thought out the matter for himself, announced his intention of being publicly baptized. * *

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* * * * * * * * * * *

Failing to find a Baptist minister in Newmarket, he arranged with Mr. Cantlow, the pastor of a small church in the village of Isleham, which is situated in the Fen country, to immerse him in the river Lark.

On the 1st of May, in 1850, he wrote to his father and mother, apprising them of the arrangements made for his baptism. His mother said to him :—

ISLEHAM FERRY.

"Ah, Charlie! I have often prayed that you might be saved, but never that you should become a Baptist."

To this Charles replied : "God has answered your prayers, mother, with his usual bounty, and given you more than you asked."

On Friday, May 3, 1850, his mother's birthday, he rose up early in the morning, and spent two quiet hours alone with God in prayer. He then walked eight

miles to Isleham Ferry. A great concourse of people had already assembled to witness this lad of sixteen go through the solemn ordinance; and amid deep solemnity, but with much happiness of heart, the young believer went down into the water. Having been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, he returned to Newmarket, filled with holy joy, determined to follow Christ with all his heart until the end.

At once he decided to unite himself with God's people, and with this intention he made application to join a church at Newmarket. Referring to this time, he said, in a recent sermon: "I remember the difficulty that I had when I was converted, and wished to join the Christian church in the place where I lived. I called upon the minister four successive days before I could see him; each time there was some obstacle in the way of an interview; and as I could not see him at all, I wrote and told him that I would go down to the church-meeting, and propose myself as a member.

"He looked upon me as a strange character, but I meant what I said; for I felt that I could not be happy without fellowship with the people of God. I wanted to be wherever they were; and if anybody ridiculed them, I wished to be ridiculed with them; and if people had an ugly name for them, I wanted to be called by that ugly name; for I felt that unless I suffered with Christ in His humiliation, I could not expect to reign with Him in His glory."

He did not carry out his intention of proposing himself for membership with the church. The indolent minister, seeing that the candidate was so much in

earnest, arranged to meet him, and he was introduced in the ordinary way, and joined himself to God's people.

So the new life continued at Newmarket. But we must not suppose that the old playfulness was lost. The following letter to his sister, the original of which lies before me as I write, will show how his humour at times bubbled up irrepressibly; and at the same time it will give us a glimpse of that unselfishness of character which distinguished him even to the end.

The letter is dated Cambridge, Thursday, Dec., 1850, and is addressed to Miss Caroline Louisa Spurgeon. He writes—

"Your name is so long that it will almost reach across the paper. We have one young gentleman in our school whose name is Edward Ralph William Baxter Tweed; the boys tease him about his long name; but he is a very good boy, and that makes his name a good one. Everybody's name is pretty, if they are good people. The Duke of Tuscany has just had a little son; the little fellow was taken to the Catholic Cathedral, * * * * * * and then they named him—you must get Eliza to read it—Giovanni Nepomerceno Maria Annunziata Guiseppe Giovanbaptista Ferdinando Baldassere Luigi Gonzaga Pietro Allesandro Zanobi Antonino. A pretty name to go to bed and get up with; it will be a long while before he will be able to say it all the way through! If anyone is called by the name of Christian, that is better than all these great words: it is the best name in the world, except the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. My best love to you. I hope you will enjoy yourself, and try to make others happy, too; for then you are sure to be happy

yourself; whereas, if you only look out to please yourself, you will make others uncomfortable, and will not make even yourself happy. However, of course, you know that, and I need not tell you of it. A happy Christmas to you.

Your loving brother, CHARLES."

On my last visit to Mr. Spurgeon's home, shortly before his terrible illness, he said at the tea-table, that when he was a young man, at Newmarket, the cook in the school was an earnest, Christian woman, with a good understanding of God's truth, but with a very broad accent, and a very quaint way of expressing her thoughts.

They both attended the same place of worship; and, one day, there had been in the sermon neither gospel for the sinner nor instruction for the saint. When he got home, he went down into the kitchen, and said to her—

"How did you get on this morning, cook? I did not find a crumb for my soul in the whole sermon."

The cook replied, "Well, Spargon, I got on very well indeed; for, all the time the man was preaching, I was like an old hen scratching away with her leg, turning over a heap of rubbish; and though I could not find any food, the continual scratching kept me warm."

In the evening, being again disappointed with the preacher's discourse, the young tutor went to his friend in the kitchen for comfort once more.

"Well, Spargon," she said, this time, "I got on better to-night; for to all the preacher said, I just put a *not*, and this turned all his talk into real gospel."

Amid such honest surroundings, the new life of the young usher rapidly developed.

CHAPTER IX.

Under the shadow of the University.

THE young tutor's stay at Newmarket was not a very prolonged one. But he made hay while the sun shone, and quickly became a power for God in the place. He was soon in frequent request to give addresses to the Sunday-school. These addresses were so pithy and pointed, that the parents of the children gathered in large numbers to hear them too, until sometimes he had more grown-up people to speak to, than the minister had at the ordinary services.

Before leaving Newmarket, he gave an address in public on Missions, and a clergyman of the Church of England, who was present, was so delighted with it that he made the youthful speaker a present of a sovereign, to encourage him to employ his talents in such good service.

When Mr. Leeding, who had been one of his former masters, removed from Colchester to Cambridge, in order to commence a private college for young gentlemen there, he urgently invited young Spurgeon to join him, and chiefly out of gratitude for the instruction received from Mr. Leeding while attending his school at Colchester, Mr. Spurgeon agreed to his proposal;

and in a little while bade adieu to his labours at Newmarket.

Another motive led to the change. His thirst for knowledge was insatiable, and he thought that he might have a greater opportunity of acquiring it at Cambridge than elsewhere. In addition to this he intended to take his degree at the University. Mr. Leeding assured him he would be quite able to do this without further study, but discovering that his nonconformity would debar him from it, he renounced the idea. Happily, the absurd religious test has been removed, and now both Oxford and Cambridge are open equally to Churchmen and Dissenters.

Having taken up his abode under the shadow of the University, he at once identified himself with the church worshipping in St. Andrew's Street, which for years has been supported by many of the leading men of the town. It has gained and retained a reputation, not only for usefulness, but for respectability and decorum.

A few weeks after Charles Spurgeon had been received into church fellowship there, he joined his brethren at the Lord's Table. The minister spoke on the subject of brotherly kindness, and the young communicant quite thought he meant all he said. So on leaving the chapel after the service, he briskly introduced himself to the gentleman who had been sitting in front of him.

"How do you do, sir," he said.

The gentleman whom he addressed seemed somewhat astonished at this remark, and informed the young man that he did not know him.

"But I believe you are my brother," answered he.

"I do not understand you."

Not the least abashed, young Spurgeon informed him that he was a stranger in the town, but he was a member of the same church, and had just sat at the Lord's Table with him.

"The minister said we were all brothers," he urged, "and I believed him, so I thought I would come and speak to you."

For two or three minutes the gentleman looked at him with the utmost astonishment, and then said, "There now, that's what I call genuine. Come to my house; you shall be my brother as long as we live."

So they went home to tea together.

A sermon which Mr. Spurgeon preached at Amersham, in the year 1857, lies before me. In it he records the incident, and says concerning the gentleman whom he thus suddenly accosted—"To this day he is my dearest friend; I never pass through that town without going to his house, and no name gives more music to me among the sons of men than his."

The gentleman is still living, and is now an old man; in writing to me this week he says, "I look back with much gratitude forty years to the time when the cheery face of our dearly lamented friend, C. H. Spurgeon was present with us in our Sunday-school. He was so original in all that he undertook, that his work keeps quite fresh in my memory. His class at first was composed of very young children, so that he literally fulfilled the charge, 'Feed my Lambs,' until he was called away to higher service. His appearance on Sundays brightened up most of the faces of the scholars in our school.

"It was some time before all the teachers could be

persuaded of his credentials for such service; some were taken a little aback at his free, open, and natural manner in the work, and when he stood up in the school to give an address, the facial expression of a few was the index of their thoughts.

"His constant appearance at the Monday evening prayer meetings surprised some of the seniors, and his supplications at the throne of grace were not at all like their own. His boldness in prayer, at such an age, caused some of them to shake their heads, and to say that he had a good deal yet to learn. But in the midst of it all, there was no trace of egotism in him. He pursued his way in his 'own way,' and he worked to real purpose.

"A section of the Church viewed his labours with favour, and argued a great future for him. I may be permitted to say I was one of them, and this opinion was confirmed by his coming to my home and almost becoming one of us.

"One Sunday evening he was asked to preach to the children at Cherryhinton, and on this occasion I accompanied him. He commenced his address by saying:

"'Whilst I sat with my friend at tea, I noticed a bright little boy who was standing before the window which looked into the garden; he was rapidly passing his hands up and down the panes of glass, as if he wanted to catch something. My curiosity led me to go up to him, when I found he was busily engaged in trying to catch a large fly. But he was unsuccessful in the attempt.

"'Now, boys and girls, I should like to ask you why this little fellow was unable to do this?'

A few answers from the children were given to his query, but none of them solved the mystery.

"'Well, children,' said he, 'I will tell you why. It was because *the fly was on the other side of the window.*'

"From this incident the young preacher, who had only just turned sixteen, proceeded most graphically to describe the hindrances which stood in their way of obtaining that which they were all so desirous of having—happiness here and joy hereafter; and showed that the reason of their disappointment was that they sought for the blessing on the wrong side of things."

Many years after this event, my friend visited Mr. Spurgeon at Clapham, on a Saturday evening, and the conversation turned upon these early days. Mr. Watts referred to the incident of the fly, and Mr. Spurgeon smiled when he heard of it, but said nothing. The next day, however, to his surprise, Mr. Spurgeon used this same incident in the Tabernacle to illustrate his point, as he urged his hearers to search after happiness where alone it may be obtained; and he enforced the lesson with much power.

The same correspondent informs me that on another occasion he heard Mr. Spurgeon address his own Sunday-school in the following manner.

"'I was walking in the streets yesterday,' he said, 'and I met a fine military man, looking very smart in his regimentals. He had a sword dangling at his side, and with him were two young men, from whose caps long streamers of bright-coloured ribbons were floating. What do you think was the meaning of this?'"

"Many guesses and replies followed from the children,

but none were exactly to the speaker's mind. He therefore answered his own question.

"'This officer,' he said, 'was in the Queen's service, and was what is called a recruiting sergeant. It was his business to speak of the glory of the Queen's service, and induce others to join the army. He had invited these young men to enlist as soldiers, and the long gay ribbons showed everybody that they had accepted this offer.'

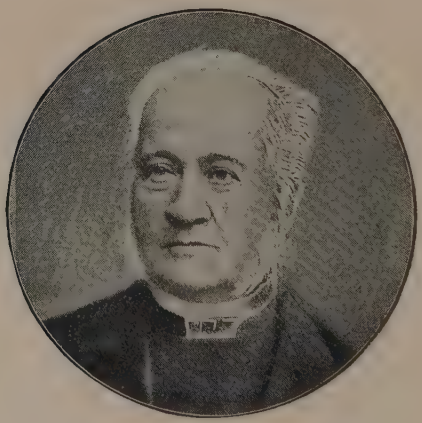
"'My dear children,' he continued, 'I am seeking with all my heart to persuade you to enlist in the service of King Jesus. The warfare is very different to that of the young men I have been speaking about. They are to fight for a glory which fades away, but we shall obtain an eternal reward. We shall never be pensioned off on half-pay, but shall dwell eternally with Christ, our Captain, in one of His mansions in Heaven. Will you not, therefore, now enlist?'"

This address created such an impression, that, even after forty years, the memory of it is quite vivid to at least one of those who heard it.

I have another friend in Cambridge, Mr. George Apthorpe, one of the deacons of St. Andrew's Church, who formed an acquaintance with Mr. Spurgeon the first Sunday after he had left Newmarket, and who remained one of his supporters to the very end.

In one of his letters to me he says, "No sooner did Mr. Spurgeon join the church than he became a Sunday-school teacher. His class in the school was situated next to mine, and so interesting was the new teacher's conversation with his scholars, that I frequently endeavoured to listen to his words, and was greatly profited by the remarks I overheard."

This gentleman also refers to Mr. Spurgeon's peculiar and expressive prayers which did not find acceptance in some quarters: they were, in fact, too pointed and direct in their appeals to please some of the very "proper" people, whose manners had grown very precise because they had lived so long under the shadow of the University.



MR. SPURGEON'S FATHER.

CHAPTER X.

The Beginning of Miracles.

THOUSANDS of lives have been changed by the wonderful preaching of the man of God whose history occupies these pages His first sermon was preached in a public-house, his second in a stable, and his third in a cottage. These were, however, but the beginning of miracles, even as turning the water into wine, at Cana of Galilee, was only the first of the wondrous works of our Lord.

As a boy, our Essex lad was blessed with a quick eye, an active brain, a ready tongue, a bold spirit, and a tender heart. He had noticed, in Stambourne, that, alongside the poor people's cottages there was planted a public-house. Why they should supply poison here as well as food, he could not understand ; and to many besides himself these things are mysteries to this day. But so it is. Wherever you find a village containing a church, or a chapel, some one is sure to think they also need a beer-shop. In a country village it soon becomes known who supports the publican. There are few secrets in a small community. Mr. Jones is sure to know if Mr. Williams's horse has gone lame ; if Mr. Brown's cow has died, all the village knows of it before bedtime ; and anybody who

visited the public-house could not expect to keep it a secret very long.

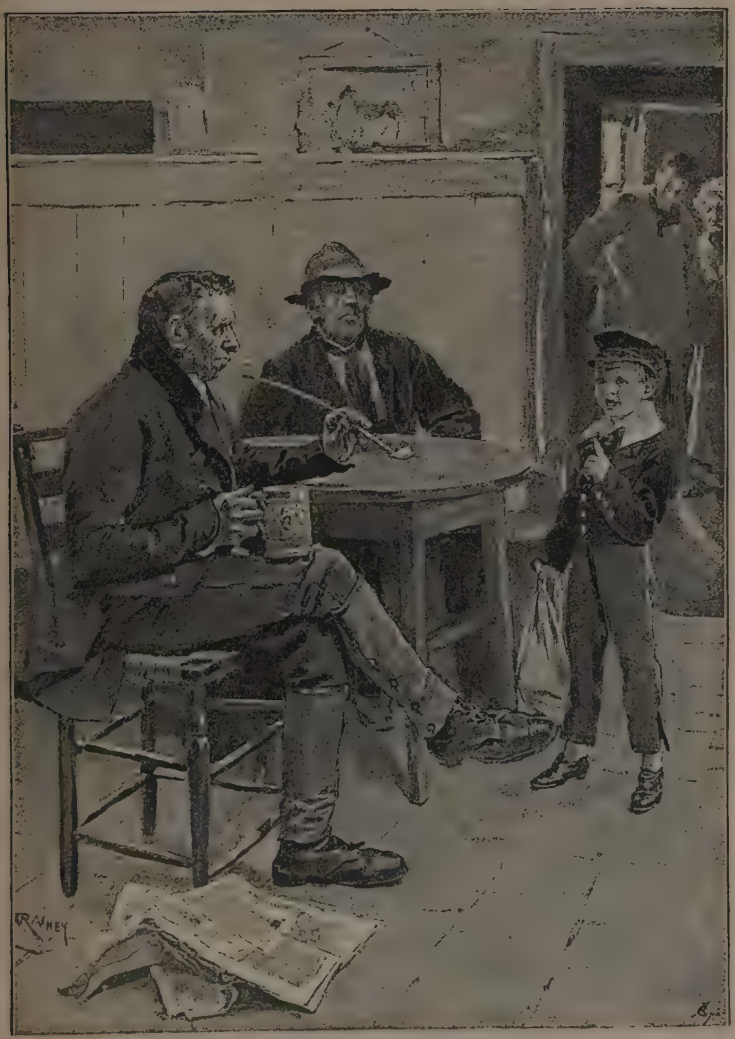
Now, a village tap-room is not a very inviting place for anybody, least of all for a church-goer. There is generally a large, bare room, with a round table on three legs, in the centre, and large wooden seats with high backs all round the room. There might, perhaps, be a wooden arm-chair or two, and spittoons filled with sawdust underneath them, while a liberal supply of long clay pipes is usually placed on the table, ready for the expected customers.

It was in a place something like this that the venerable James Spurgeon's grandson preached his first sermon, in the days when he was yet a ruddy lad, dressed in a short jacket, with a white linen collar. He had heard his dear old grandfather say, in the manse, how sad it was that Old Rhodes, one of the members of the church, should spend so much of his time in the public-house, sitting in the seat of the scornful; and he had found out by his grandfather's prayers what a real trouble it was to him. The tears came to the old minister's eyes as he prayed for him, and the little fellow, when he saw them, wished that this man could be made to stop his conduct, lest he should break his grandfather's heart.

So one day, when he heard them speaking at home about the man, Charlie put in his little say, and astonished them all, by exclaiming,

"I'll kill Old Rhodes; that I will."

"Hush! hush! my dear," said his grandfather; "you must not talk like that, it would be very wrong to kill him; and I am sure you would not think of doing such a thing."



KILLING OLD RHODES.

"I won't do anything bad," said Charlie; "but I'll kill old Rhodes, that I will; he shan't break my grandfather's heart with his drinking ways."

Not long afterwards, the brave little fellow marched down the village, and walked right into the tap-room where old Rhodes sat, as you see him in the picture, with a big mug before him filled with something that had a head like a cauliflower, and which was dirty stuff in the middle and muddy at the bottom. I wonder if my little readers know what it was? Just as old Rhodes was about to drink it, having taken his pipe out of his mouth for that purpose, young Spurgeon preached out his first sermon.

Without waiting to announce his subject, he pointed his finger at the old man, by way of application, and said, in a tone of authority—

"What dost thou here, Elijah, sitting with the ungodly? and you a member of a church, breaking your pastor's heart; I am ashamed of you! I would not break my pastor's heart, I'm sure."

Having delivered his message, he walked away; but the sermon had struck home to the conscience of that old man, and stuck to him in a manner that his grandfather's sermons had never done.

Charlie returned to the manse, and said—

"Grandfather, don't fret; I have killed old Rhodes."

"Killed old Rhodes!" said his grandfather.

"I've settled him this time," said the youthful David, who had slain his Goliath; "he won't grieve my dear grandfather any more."

Nothing more could be gleaned from the boy just then as to what had taken place; but some time after-

wards, old Rhodes himself called at the manse, and told the minister how his grandson had been preaching to him in the public-house down the village. He confessed that the lad's words had touched his heart, and aroused his conscience, and said that he was deeply sorry for his conduct. He asked the forgiveness of his pastor, and promised that such an inconsistency should never occur in his life again. And it never did. He was so ashamed of himself, and so repentant, that he henceforth became a comfort to his pastor, a credit to his church, and a blessing to the village. That was the effect of the first sermon ; truly, it was the beginning of miracles!

Some time afterwards, the second sermon was delivered. You must help me with your imagination while I endeavour to describe to you the circumstances under which it was given. The scene was in a stable, at the rear of his father's house, at Colchester. One day his father came suddenly to the door, and was very much interested and amused to see his eldest son perched up in the hayrack, which was fitted against the wall. His short fat legs were hanging through the bars, and there he was preaching away to his heart's content. In the manger, underneath the preacher, was his little brother James, who was supposed to be a clerk, and whose duty was to give out the hymns and notices. Some clean straw had been scattered on the floor of the stable, to form a carpet for what answered instead of the big square pew. A truss of hay was placed in the centre of this, and served as a seat for the two little girls, who sat and listened most attentively to all that the preacher and the clerk said.

To these children their service was very real and most complete. They sang together, with all their hearts, some of the hymns they had committed to memory. The preaching was, at any rate, most interesting to the miniature audience; and the prayers, though simple and childlike, were both pleasing to their dear grandfather, and acceptable to God, who delights to hear and answer children's prayers.

Now comes an interval of years, during which this little man had come to a saving knowledge of the truth in Jesus; had confessed his faith; and in Sunday-school, and in the prayer-meetings, had commended himself to many. He had not, however, ventured to conduct a regular service, until a memorable Sunday evening, when he preached what is usually spoken of as his first sermon, but which I have called the third.

It was a bright sunny Sunday evening, when two young men, at the request of Mr. Vinter (or as Mr. Spurgeon used to call him "Bishop Vinter,") might have been seen walking across the fields, to a village called Teversham, a distance of four miles from Cambridge, where, during the afternoon of the same day, they had been teaching in the Sunday-school.

One of these two young men was the young tutor.

His companion presently said to him, "I trust you will have a good time to-night, with the villagers, and that God will bless your word to the saving of some of their souls."

"I am not going to speak," said young Spurgeon. "I never preached in my life. I quite understood that I was to go to Teversham to keep you company, and listen to what *you* had to say."

"But I have nothing to say, and could not say it if I had," replied Mr. Sadler.

"Well," said the young tutor, "this is a pretty fix our old friend has placed us both in."

"Yes, indeed it is," said his companion, "but you must pull us out of it; I cannot, I assure you."

It was quite clear before they reached the village that the responsibility of the sermon must fall upon Spurgeon; so looking up to the Lord for guidance and help, he resolved to do his best.

When they arrived at the cottage, where the service was to be conducted, with much fear and trembling he conducted the meeting, and gave an address, from the words, "Unto you, therefore, which believe, He is precious." On this subject, he spoke out of a heart wholly devoted to Christ, and was enabled to touch the hearts of the assembled villagers.

At the close of the service, an elderly dame supplemented her expressions of surprise by venturing to ask the preacher his age.

"Under sixty," he replied.

"Yes, and under sixteen," added the woman.

But even at that age, he was still able to discourse on this high topic, and the preciousness of Christ has ever since been the theme of his ministry, and the fragrance of his life. I pray that Christ may be precious to the young people who read this book, as early in life as He was precious to him; and that they may know His saving power so truly that they may not be afraid to speak of it, should they be called upon to do so.

In Mr. Spurgeon's case, this was the beginning of miracles.

CHAPTER XI.

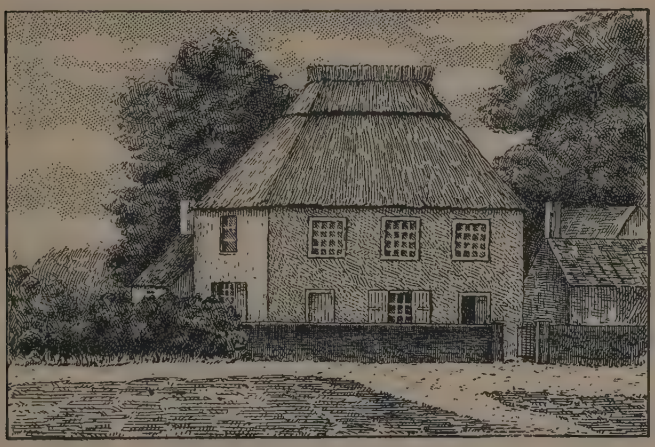
The Village Pastor.

HAVING begun to declare the gospel, young Spurgeon went on from strength to strength. The first taste of the joy of the service only whetted his appetite for more. And thus it came to pass that, like his Master, he went round about the villages teaching and preaching, till his name and fame became widely known. Wherever he went he always did his best; and the old adage, that "present faithfulness is a sure guarantee of future success," was abundantly verified in his case.

One Sunday he was selected by the Secretary of the "Local Preachers' Association" in Cambridge to supply the pulpit of the Baptist Chapel at Waterbeach, a village containing some 300 houses, and with a population of about 1,200, which is situated some five miles from the University town. With so much acceptance did he declare the Word, that he was invited to come again and again. At this time, the little church at Waterbeach was in a very weak state, numbering only some forty members. But in a few months the chapel proved too small to accommodate those who became anxious to hear this popular preacher; and best of all, many were added to the Lord.

Seeing this, the church determined to call the

youthful preacher to the pastorate. So poor were they, however, that the most they could promise their new Pastor was a stipend of £40 a year; but though the sum was little, such was his love for preaching Christ that he accepted the call, being quite satisfied that if the villagers' purses were small, their hearts were large. Therefore he determined to lead them and feed them by the grace of God, to the best of his ability.



THE CHAPEL AT WATERBEACH.

His language in the pulpit was at times very quaint, striking, and graphic; and his original way of enforcing his subject upon the attention of the congregation was the talk of the people for miles round. The rumour of his doings reached Cambridge, and some of the aristocratic people there were now and then shocked by some expressive figures of speech which he was reported to have used in the pulpit.

On one occasion, in describing the depravity of

unregenerate men, he said that if some of them were allowed to enter heaven in their unconverted state, they would pick the angels' pockets.

One venerable old man at Cambridge, named Brimley, who had heard of this extravagant flight of imagination on the part of the young preacher, deemed it his duty to stop him in the street and expostulate with him on his daring metaphor. He told him that such preaching was very foolish, and added that the angels have no pockets to be picked.

For this information the young preacher thanked his venerable friend and wished him "Good day."

The following week young Spurgeon met Mr. Brimley, and stopping him, said,

"I have put that matter right with my people."

"What do you mean?" said this stately old gentleman.

"I told my people on Sunday," said the saucy young preacher, "that I had made a mistake in saying that if an unconverted man were allowed to enter heaven, he would be guilty of picking the angels' pockets, for Mr. Brimley, of Cambridge, says the angels have no pockets, and *he knows*." But I added, that "if an unconverted man entered heaven and there were no pockets to pick, he would very probably pluck the very feathers out of the angels' wings."

"You don't mean to say you said that?" said old Brimley, in great dismay.

"Indeed I did," said the young pastor. "You know I must be right."

"Then I will never correct you again."

"That is just what I wanted you to say," retorted the Waterbeach Pastor, at which they shook hands and parted good friends.

It was no easy task for a lad of seventeen to teach all the week, and then to preach three times on Sundays. But a fire that would not be quenched burned in this devoted heart.

Each Sunday at Waterbeach a new home was provided for him. So great was the desire of the people to have him under their roof, and so hospitable were they, that when he received his call to the Metropolis, he had not exhausted his long list of Sunday accommodation.

During his pastorate at Waterbeach, he still resided at Cambridge, augmenting his stipend by the income derived from teaching during the week, in Mr. Leeding's private college. I have heard Mr. Spurgeon say that at that time he used to keep his hands in his pockets because there was often nothing else in them.

On one occasion when his funds were low and he considered his hat was rather shabby for a village pastor, and knowing it was considered a very wrong thing for a minister of the gospel to wear a shabby hat, he prayed to the Lord to send him the money to purchase a new one. He quite expected the Lord to grant his request, but he was astonished beyond measure in the way in which his prayer was answered.

There was an old man who lived very near to him, who was considered by everybody to be a stingy old miser. So niggardly was he, that he ordered his coffin before he died, lest anybody should make any profit out of it. The Sunday after Mr. Spurgeon had offered his prayer, the old man entered his vestry, and said to the young preacher,

"Here is seven and sixpence, Mr. Spurgeon. Will you please accept it and pray for me?"

Mr. Spurgeon promised to pray for him, thanked him for his gift, and purchased a new hat with the money on the following day.

The next Sunday the same old man again appeared in the minister's vestry, and said in a trembling voice, "Mr. Spurgeon, will you please still continue to pray for me, for I am afraid I am growing very covetous. I fear my covetous nature will be the ruin of me."

"I am surprised to hear you say that," replied the preacher, "for last Sunday I came to the conclusion that you were growing quite liberal."

"No, I am not," the old man responded. Last Sunday the Lord distinctly told me to give you half a sovereign, but such was my greedy nature, that I kept back half a crown of it."

"Oh, if that is it," said the boy preacher, "you can easily set the matter right. You must not rob God. If the Lord told you to give me ten shillings, and you only gave me seven and sixpence you will have no peace until you give me the other half-crown."

Out came a bright half-crown from the old miser's pocket, and he handed it over to the Pastor, asking his forgiveness, and returning home with a lighter heart than he had had for many a day.

Now that Mr. Spurgeon had become the Pastor at Waterbeach, his success there made it apparent to all who knew him that his future life must be that of a preacher of the gospel. Many of his friends, including his own father, became anxious for him to go to college to complete his studies, and be thoroughly equipped for this high calling in life.

After consultation with his friends, he decided to

act upon their advice, and accordingly application was made to what is now known as Regent's Park College. Dr. Angus, the principal of that Institution, made an appointment to see the village Pastor at Cambridge, which town he was soon to visit. The interview was to take place at the home of Mr. Macmillan, the publisher. Mr. Spurgeon rose early for prayer on the day appointed for the interview, and sought God's guidance in the great and important step he was about to take.

At the time arranged, and at the tick of the clock, he was at the front-door of Mr. Macmillan's house.

He rang the bell, and the servant, on opening the door, asked him in, and conducted him into a private room, and there he sat for two long weary hours, till at last his patience could stand it no longer. So he rang the bell, and was much annoyed to find that the stupid girl had not announced his name, and had forgotten all about his being in the house.

Dr. Angus had also sat waiting in an adjoining room until his patience was exhausted too, and by the time the discovery was made, he had left Cambridge by train for London, without the interview thus arranged ever taking place, though both parties were at the house appointed and at the time arranged.

Through this servant's mistake, the whole course of Mr. Spurgeon's life was entirely changed. God graciously overruled her blunder for the future good of the village Pastor; and He so directed his steps that it proved a blessing to the whole world.

Finding that the Principal of the College had returned to London, Mr. Spurgeon adopted a very wise course. Being engaged to preach the same

afternoon at a village, and feeling downcast and disappointed, he took a country walk alone. Lifting up his heart as he crossed the Common, he seemed to hear the voice of God, almost audibly saying to him,

"Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not!"

This vivid impression gave him quite a new view of things, and there and then he made up his mind not to write to Dr. Angus and explain matters as he had at first intended. He resolved to stay at Waterbeach, where God had owned his labours, even though he remained in humble circumstances for the rest of his life. But God had other plans for him.

The Cambridge Sunday School Union is an efficient Institution, and to see the beautiful Guildhall crowded with Sunday-school children on their Anniversary occasions is a sight, once seen, never to be forgotten. It was while I was delivering an address at this united gathering of children on 16th April, 1876, that my esteemed colleague, Mr. W. Y. Fullerton, first saw me and heard me speak. Twenty-three years previously, on a similar Anniversary occasion in 1853, Mr. Gould, a deacon of the Baptist Church at Loughton, in Essex, first heard the young preacher from Waterbeach, and he was so much impressed with his ability and spiritual power, that he strongly recommended Mr. Thomas Olney, one of the deacons of the New Park Street Baptist Chapel, to invite the village Pastor to preach in London. The Guildhall in Cambridge, was thus memorable both to Mr. Spurgeon and to me. What the result was in his case is already known to all the world.

CHAPTER XII.

From the Shires to the City.

ONE Lord's-day morning, in December, 1853, a letter, bearing the London postmark, was handed by one of the deacons of the church at Waterbeach, to Mr. Spurgeon, as he sat in the table-pew for a few minutes' rest before commencing his pastoral duties for the day. Dr. Rippon's Hymn-book was in his hand, and he was just choosing the hymns for the morning service, when he opened the letter and found it to be an invitation to occupy the pulpit of the great hymn-compiler at New Park Street, Southwark.

With some surprise, he turned to one of the deacons and, handing him the letter, said—

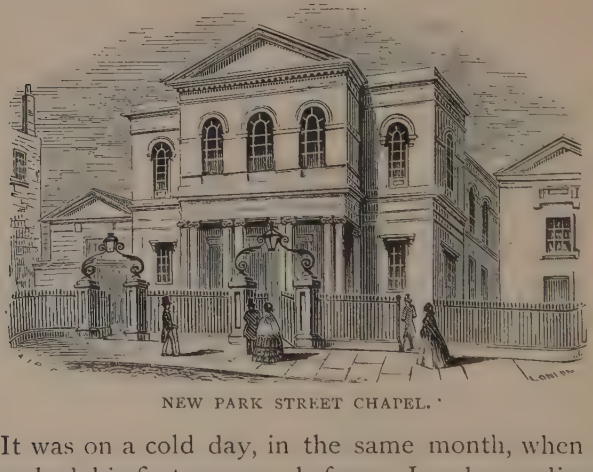
"There must be some mistake here."

"I am afraid there is no mistake," replied the old man, shaking his head; "I was sure we could not keep you very long in our village."

The preacher put the letter in his pocket, and lifting his heart to God for blessing on that day's labours, and for guidance on the morrow, he thought no more about it, until the work of the day had ceased. The following morning he wrote saying that they had made a mistake in inviting him to a London pulpit,

and that he is quite unfit for such a responsibility, being only nineteen years old.

He received a reply, assuring him that there was no mistake ; that the deacons of the church had a strong desire that he should occupy their pulpit; and to make the matter still more definite, they told him that he would find comfortable accommodation at Queen Square, Bloomsbury. So it seemed as if he must accept the invitation.



NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL.

It was on a cold day, in the same month, when he preached his first sermon before a London audience. He ascended the platform with that modest demeanour, and real reverence, which becomes a true ambassador of the gospel message. His first prayer in the pulpit soon called forth ejaculations of praise in the pew. The text was, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." He had not to

carry his subject; for it was apparent to all who heard him that his subject carried him; losing sight of the hundreds of empty seats around him, he warmed up as he proceeded with his theme, so that the hearts of those who formed his congregation were all aglow, as if they had been touched by the divine flame from the altar of God.

On this memorable Sunday, both the preacher and the sermon were, without doubt, divinely appointed. The previous day, as the youthful preacher had travelled to London, the words, "He must needs go through Samaria," had kept running through his mind, and he meditated a good deal upon them during the Saturday night and early Sunday morning. But on arriving at the chapel, he was guided by God's good Spirit to choose the other subject.

His general appearance in the pulpit showed unmistakably that he was not a Londoner; his garments were not of the city style; and neither the cut of his coat, nor the shape of his collar, gave any indication of an ecclesiastical calling. Even the officers of the church, who had invited him to supply their pulpit, were not at all struck with the first sight of him; but after listening to his powerful discourse, all thought of the man's personal appearance vanished from their minds in the impression he produced. His manner was lost in his matter; and they were unanimous that he was a God-sent man.

During the afternoon, the news that the beardless boy from the country had preached that morning a marvellous sermon, spread like wildfire among the New Park Street friends. His personality and his peculiarities were talked of, as well as his subject.

One said, "Did you see what a huge black satin stock the young preacher had on this morning?"

Another young lady had noticed that there were actually blue spots upon his pocket-handkerchief.

Owing to the various reports circulated during the day, the evening congregation had increased considerably. The text on this occasion was, "They are without fault before the throne of God." I hope my young friends will find out both these texts in their Bibles, and put a mark against them. The first was true of Mr. Spurgeon while he was here; the second is fulfilled for him now.

Whatever the people thought of the preacher that day, they were convinced that they had never heard anything like such sermons in New Park Street before; and many refused to leave the chapel until they had received a definite promise from the deacons that Mr. Spurgeon would be invited to preach there again with a view to the pastorate.

This Sunday was, doubtless, a great ordeal for the youthful preacher; but it proved to be a wonderful day for the history of that church. Truly might the preacher, the deacons, and the church-members have written on the tablets of their hearts the words which Moses spake unto the people, "Remember this day." (Can you find that text?)

In a few days, the preacher was heartily and unanimously invited to occupy the pulpit for six months, in anticipation of a more permanent arrangement. He replied to this overture in a modest, and manly letter, in which his simplicity and business capacity were clearly shown. We have not room for it all; but as an example of the spirit in which a young man

should enter upon a great undertaking, read this paragraph, and then imitate the unassuming independence of it. He says—

"With regard to a six months' invitation from you, I have no objection to the length of time, but rather approve of the prudence of the church in wishing to have one so young as myself on an extended period of approbation. But I write after well weighing the matter, when I say positively that I cannot, I *dare* not, accept an unqualified invitation for so long a time. My objection is not to the length of time of probation, but it ill becomes a youth to promise to preach to a London congregation so long, until he knows them and they know him. I would engage to supply for three months of that time, and then, should the congregation fail, or the church disagree, I would reserve to myself liberty, without breach of engagement, to retire; and you would, on your part, have the right to dismiss me without seeming to treat me ill."

The letter concludes with an earnest request that prayer should be offered on his behalf; for he early realized that only as God blessed him would he be prospered.

An interesting advertisement which appeared in a Cambridge newspaper about the end of the year 1853, shows that before receiving the invitation to London, Mr. Spurgeon had arranged to begin a School on his own account, in addition to his Village Pastorate. He had, indeed, obtained two pupils ere he left. Here is the announcement of his intentions, which gives some idea of his attainments.

"No. 60, Upper Park Street, Cambridge.

"Mr. C. H. Spurgeon begs to inform his numerous friends that, after Christmas, he intends taking six or seven young gentlemen as day pupils. He will endeavour to the utmost to impart a good commercial education. The ordinary routine will include arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and mensuration; grammar and composition; ancient and modern history; geography, natural history, astronomy, Scripture and drawing. Latin, and the elements of Greek and French, if required. Terms £5 per annum."

Before finally leaving for London, he called to bid farewell to a friend of mine at Cambridge, who has a distinct recollection of the conversation of that visit. The youthful pastor talked much of the great responsibility of accepting the call to the Metropolis, yet he said that he had made up his mind to go about his work in London just the same as if he had remained at Waterbeach.

"I intend," he added, "to use the same methods, to preach the same gospel, relying implicitly upon the study of God's Word, and the aid of the Holy Spirit."

The history of his future work shows that he faithfully adhered to his resolve.

So it came to pass that Mr. Spurgeon left 60, Park Street, Cambridge, to preach at New Park Street, London; and long before the six months had expired, it was quite clear to everybody that he must continue in his new sphere.

CHAPTER XIII.

Popularity and Panic.

THE "boy preacher" soon became a household topic in London. If ever the city was taken by storm, it was by this brave, sharp-eyed country pastor. His voice was as clear as a clarion-note. He spake right from his heart what he believed to be true, and had the courage of his convictions. He fawned for no man's favour, nor feared any man's frown. Plainly and faithfully he proclaimed the blessed gospel of God to the great crowds which gathered together. And they *were* crowds! Many were drawn by curiosity to see and hear the young man who had so marvellously moved the multitudes by his eloquence and power, and many by awakening interest in the truth, until New Park Street Chapel became totally inadequate to contain all who came; and as to the atmosphere during the services, the place was compared, by the preacher himself, to the Black Hole of Calcutta.

During the summer months, Asiatic Cholera proved a dreadful scourge throughout London. The black flag was hung across many streets, warning the strangers of the plague-stricken dwellings. The young Pastor went in and out among the people like a very angel sent from God. Even in the middle of the

night, his lonely foot-fall might have been heard upon the pavement, as he went about visiting the sick and dying. His time and strength were taxed to the uttermost. Family after family of his faithful flock was stricken and smitten by the plague, so that almost every day he was called to the graveside.

One day, when his heart was well-nigh sinking, and he almost despaired of surviving the epidemic, he was greatly cheered as he went back sad at heart to his home, by reading a paper in a shoemaker's window, which seemed like a message from God to him. It was written in a bold, clear hand, as follows—"Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling."

He stood for some time opposite the window, wondering at the appropriate message, and a strong conviction took hold of him that he would be preserved and brought safely through the time of pestilence. He believed he owed his life to that bill in the window, though in after years he could never accurately discover who had put it there.

No man in this world was more vilified than Spurgeon was at this time. Everybody who becomes popular has to pay for it in some shape or other, but the treatment this good man received was exceptional in its severity. Negro minstrels ridiculed him in their songs; actors in the play cracked rude jokes at his expense; ridiculous cartoons of him were issued, depicting him in anything but complimentary attitudes. One of them represented him as a seller of fly papers, and was entitled "Catch-'em-alive-O!"; but this is

only a sample of scores. The newspapers spoke of him as the "Essex bumpkin."

If scorn and derision could have stopped his usefulness, he had enough to have killed him ten times over; but I have heard him say that, when these things were said about him, they hurt him less than

"CATCH-'EM-ALIVE-O!"

the fulsome eulogies of later years. He comforted his heart by saying that no one could say worse things about him than he could say about himself; for though his outward life was blameless, he truly knew his own heart as it was revealed in the presence

of God. In that presence he lived; and through evil report, and through good report, he went straight on with his life's work, telling sinners how they might be saved, and teaching saints so to live as to bring glory to God.

So crowded did the sanctuary at New Park Street at length become, that one Sunday night the preacher exclaimed during his discourse,—

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, and by faith this wall at the back shall come down too."

One prudent deacon expressed his disapproval of this remark, in strong language, at the close of the service.

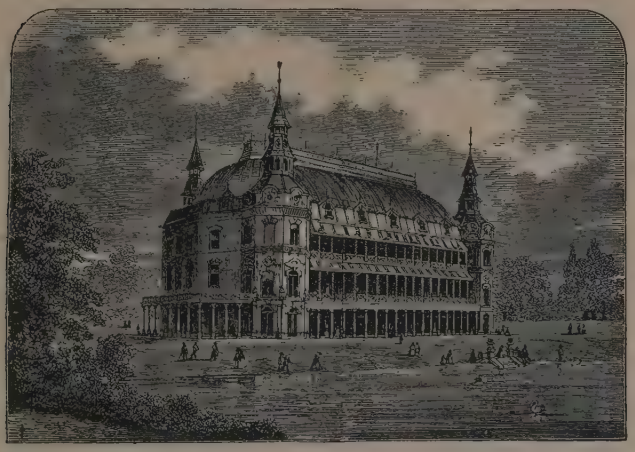
"I hope we shall never hear such a thing again," he said.

"You will hear no more about it when it is done," said Mr. Spurgeon, "so the sooner you set about it, the better it will be for all concerned."

His prophecy was true. Quite early the following year the wall was down, and the place was being enlarged. The congregation assembled meanwhile in Exeter Hall. But even after the building at New Park Street was enlarged, it could not accommodate the crowds which came, so the deacons were compelled to obtain a larger place. The largest available building was the Music Hall, belonging to the Royal Surrey Gardens; and although such a thing was then unheard of, this hall was engaged for the Sunday evening services.

On 19th of October, 1856, the first service was held there, and it is estimated that quite 12,000 persons thronged to it. All the approaches were crowded, and many were unable to get near the building. The

service had only proceeded as far as the second prayer, when suddenly, from various parts of the hall, there arose a cry of "Fire! Fire!" and the audience was seized with a sudden panic. A scene of wild confusion followed; men and women rushed for the doors, trampling upon each other in their anxiety to get out. Several persons were killed, and many more were seriously injured. Mr. Spurgeon



SURREY MUSIC HALL.

endeavoured to still the panic, and was in great measure successful, but the shock to his system was so great that for weeks he was unable to preach; indeed, he never fully threw off the effects of it. About nine months before he was called to higher service, he said, referring to this sad time:—

"After the terrible accident in the Surrey Gardens I had to go away into the country, and keep quite

still. The very sight of the Bible made me cry. I could but keep alone in the garden; and I was heavy and sad, for people had been killed in the accident; and there I was, half dead myself. I remember how I got back my comfort, and I preached on the Sabbath after I recovered. I had been walking round the garden, and I was standing under a tree. If it is there now, I should know it; and I remembered these words: "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour"

"Oh", I thought to myself, "I am only a common soldier. If I die in a ditch, I do not care. The king is honoured. He wins the victory;" and I was like those French soldiers in the old times, who loved the emperor; and you know how, when they were dying, if he rode by, the wounded man would raise himself up on his elbow, and cry once more, '*Vive l'Empereur!*' for the emperor was graven on his heart."

He immediately returned to the house and was able to conduct family worship, and the very next Sunday renewed his preaching in the Music Hall. In view of the accident, services were only held there in the mornings. They were continued with the greatest success and blessing; being, in fact, the great attraction to all classes in London. But when the grounds of the Hall were opened by the proprietors for Sunday evening amusements, Mr. Spurgeon, unable to lend countenance to such a proceeding, removed for the second time to Exeter Hall, and remained there until the new Tabernacle was opened.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Great Tabernacle.

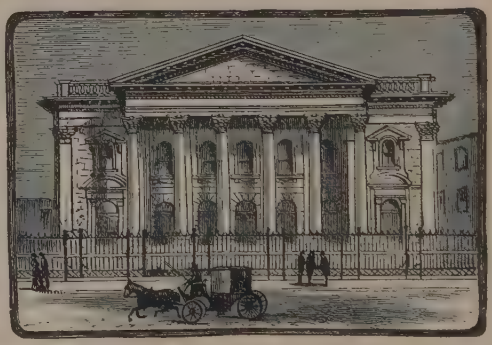
IN the year 1856 the first meeting was held to consider the plan for the erection of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. At that time the idea was thought by many to be Spurgeon's folly ; they laughed at the idea of building a place of worship to hold five thousand persons, and some even went so far as to say that another Noah had begun to build a second ark.

But amidst these jeers there were many who believed in the man, and could trace God's fingers in the work. It was no child's play to take the lead in such a task. Many a man with fifty years' experience at his back, would have shrunk from such an undertaking.

A gentleman in the West of England, who had never seen Mr. Spurgeon, sent £5,000 towards the building fund. Another gentleman met him, when out driving, and said, "You have a big business in hand in building that Tabernacle, and you will find many friends will become nervous about it before it is finished. I feel sure you will succeed, for God is in your work. Let me encourage you. I will give you £50 ; but, in addition to that, I will lend you bonds worth £20,000, free of interest, so that you may always

have something to fall back upon during the building of the Tabernacle.

The next day the bonds were deposited in Mr. Spurgeon's hands. He said nothing about it at the time, but all the while the work was in progress he had that large sum of money in hand, ready for any emergency; and when the building was opened free of debt, he returned the deposit to his friend, with grateful thanks for his encouragement and kindness



THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE.

During the building of the immense edifice, Mr. Spurgeon went up and down the land, preaching almost everywhere, and collecting money for the new building. Nearly all the towns and cities of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales were visited by him during this period. Thousands, and even tens of thousands, were gathered together to hear his words. Some-

times he preached under a fine spreading tree, with a farmer's waggon for a pulpit; at other times, temporary buildings were erected, or a large courtyard covered in with canvas, to form a huge tent for the day.

Far and wide, Mr. Spurgeon was privileged to preach during his life. At Geneva, he preached in Calvin's pulpit. In Holland, he proclaimed the same old gospel before the Dutch Court; and afterwards he had an interview with the Queen of Holland, and spoke to her on spiritual subjects.

In this way his fame was blazed abroad, his word was blessed, much of the money raised, and the work of the Lord greatly extended.

The hearts of God's children were touched in all parts of the world, till the entire cost of the erection of the great Tabernacle, £31,000, was in hand.

The builder, Mr. William Higgs, was a man in full sympathy, becoming afterwards one of Mr. Spurgeon's deacons; and only good, sound workmanship was allowed to go into the structure.

Mr. Spurgeon and Mr. Cook, another deacon, one night knelt amidst the planks, piles of timber, bricks, sand, lime, and tools, with the stars of heaven twinkling over their heads, like angels' eyes watching them. They prayed for the safety of the workmen during the erection of the place, and that God's richest blessing might rest upon the building when it was completed. Their prayers were answered, for not a single serious accident occurred during the operations.

On Tuesday, 16th of August, 1859, the first stone was laid by Sir Morton Peto, and the stone-laying was followed by a tea and public meeting, attended

by more than 2,000 persons. The evening meeting was presided over by the Mayor of Colchester, and some racy speeches were made.

Judge Payne, in the midst of his interesting remarks, made the following play upon Mr. Spurgeon's initials. He said "C. H. S. means—

A	Clear	Headed	Speaker,
who is	Clever at	Handling	Subjects,
in a	Cheerful	Hearted	Style;
he is	Captain of the	Hosts of	Surrey;
he is a	Cold-	Hating	Spirit;
he has a	Chapel-	Heating	Skill;
he is a	Care-	Hushing	Soother;
he is a	Christ-	Honouring	Soldier;
and a	Christ	Honoured	Servant."

Of the wonderful scenes which have been witnessed within the walls of this sanctuary, I have no space to speak. All sorts of people have gathered here and listened to the gospel. For over thirty years it has been crowded week by week, and strangers, especially Americans, who have visited London, have always made it a point to hear "Spurgeon," before they left The larger biographies will tell you all about this.

Some years ago the widow of the murdered President of America, James A. Garfield, wrote to Mr. Spurgeon. "It is a choice treasure from my storehouse of beautiful memories," she says "that I sat beside General Garfield in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, one bright summer Sunday morning (August 4th, 1867), and listened to your voice. I have this morning re-read from his journal his account of that day. A sentence from it may interest you. After describing his impressions of the great audience, of the

preacher, and of the sermon, he adds: "God bless Mr. Spurgeon! He is helping to work out the problem of religious and civil freedom for England in a way that he knows not of."

Mr. Spurgeon's brother, James A. Spurgeon, who was his chief helper for many years, is now Pastor of the Tabernacle, and while I write, Dr. Arthur T. Pierson, from America, is officiating as Minister, and the Lord is abundantly blessing both word and work.

MR. SPURGEON'S BROTHER.

CHAPTER XV.

The Prince of Preachers.

F many preachers it may be said, as of Saul, that they have slain their thousands, but Mr. Spurgeon, like David, has slain his tens of thousands. Judged by results he stands without a peer in the pulpit, a very prince amongst preachers.

When a man is a gifted preacher he feels at home in the pulpit, and can truly say that his pulpit is his home. He delights to be in it. If ever any man in this world loved to be in the pulpit, it was C. H. Spurgeon. He knew what he believed, and why he believed it; he got a grip of real things at the start, and when the storms and cross-winds of life came upon him he always had a big tap-root to stay and steady him. Early piety and good training when he was yet a lad did much for him when he became a preacher.

Even while yet a youth he had learnt to speak as the oracle of God. Mr. James Spurgeon says of these early days: "I remember driving my brother about the country to preach, and I used to think then, as I have thought ever since, what an extraordinary preacher he was. I began to admire him, and I went on doing it more and more the longer I knew him.

Oh, what wonderful unction and power I remember in some of those first speeches of his! I have no doubt that I was more impressible then than afterwards; but the impressions made then on others, I am sure, were as deep as any that were ever made subsequently, and certainly the effect upon the people listening to him I never knew exceeded in after years. He seemed to have leaped into the pulpit full-grown. It was wonderful.

"I can still remember distinctly some of his early sermons. Their breadth and brilliance, and the power that God's Holy Spirit evidently gave to him, were perfectly marvellous. I have traced since not more genius, I think, than impressed me then, but more breadth, more depth, more spirituality, more of God's own Word as to the knowledge both of the letter of it and of its inner meaning. But I thank God that my first impressions of my brother are amongst the brightest and best, and I have had no cause to change my opinion from that time to this. He was a God-made man and a God-sent man to his age, and by the grace of God he has been faithful to his mission all through his life."

How did the young preacher prepare his sermons? He was a born preacher, but this in itself was not enough. He lived in such close communion with God, that he was ever ready to receive messages from his Master, and he kept storing his mind with Bible truth, and all sorts of useful knowledge, which he was able to utilize as he preached. He was also ever ready to receive suggestions from passing events.

Speaking, some years ago, of the Lord's goodness in aiding him in times of extra pressure, when lack

of leisure had prevented him from preparing his subject, Mr. Spurgeon recorded a very interesting incident.

"While labouring at Waterbeach, one Sunday morning, after preaching, I went home to dine with one of my congregation. The afternoon sermon came so close upon the back of the morning one, that it was difficult to prepare, especially as dinner was a necessity. On that occasion I found my prearranged line of thought had all gone from me. Press my forehead as I might—the missing topic would not come. Time was brief, the hour was striking, and in some alarm I told the honest farmer I could not recollect what I had intended to preach about."

"Ah," he said, "never mind, you will be sure to have a good word for us."

"Just at that moment, a blazing block of wood fell out of the fire upon the hearth at my feet, smoking into one's eyes and nose at a great rate."

"'There,' said the farmer, 'there's a text for you, sir. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?'

"No, I thought; it was not plucked out, it fell out of itself. Here was a text, an illustration, and a leading thought as a nest egg for more. Further light came, and the sermon was certainly not worse than my more prepared effusions. It was better in the best sense, for one or two came forward declaring themselves to have been aroused and converted through that afternoon's discourse. I have always considered that it was a happy circumstance that I had forgotten the text from which I had intended to preach."

His grandfather and he were one in theology; the doctrines of grace were part and parcel of his nature. From first to last it was the same old faith which he preached; the ruin of man, and the redemption by Christ Jesus, applied by the Spirit of God. These truths, rung out with a clear note, will always bless mankind wherever proclaimed.

Many years ago, he was announced to preach in a country town, and quite a lively time it was that day for those Eastern County people. Carriages and gigs, waggonettes and waggons, carriers' carts and donkey traps, came trooping into the place from miles round. The chapel was crowded with people long before the time for service, and the vestry was filled with old friends of the preacher, waiting to give him a warm welcome. Amongst them was his venerable old grandfather.

The clock struck the hour for the service; the chief deacon ran into the road without his hat, and rubbing his hands, he said, "Whatever is to be done? the preacher has failed us." Many watches were consulted, and, after allowing for the variations in them all, it was concluded that the time was past.

Still the preacher had not come.

After some little delay, it was arranged to proceed with the service, and Grandfather Spurgeon was induced to take the pulpit. A look of disappointment came over the faces of the whole congregation, as he informed them that, from some cause or other, his grandson had not come, and that he had been asked to preach in his stead.

The first song languished terribly, there was neither time, tune, nor tone in it; and during the prayer

many heads kept turning round towards the door to see if the preacher had arrived. After the reading of the Scriptures, and a second hymn, the grandfather announced his text, but he had not gone far into his subject before all faces were lighted up, and all eyes beamed with delight, as the venerable old preacher exclaimed :—

"Ha! here comes my dear grandson Charles, he may preach the gospel better than I can, but he cannot preach a better gospel! Can you, Charles?"

"No indeed, nor can I preach better than you, so pray go on. That is what I have been wishing the train would do for the last three-quarters of an hour."

"No, no; not now that you have come," said his grandfather, "you must finish the sermon. I was preaching from the words, 'By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.' I have been setting forth the source and fountain-head of salvation, 'by grace'; and I am now showing them the channel of it, 'through faith.'"

Just as gracefully as a mill operative will walk up to a companion's loom, and take up the two ends of a broken thread, and, twisting them into one, proceed to weave the fabric, Mr. Spurgeon took up his grandfather's line of thought and, to the joy of all present, proceeded with the same subject.

After a time Mr. Spurgeon said, "Now we come to the depravity of human nature," and in a moment, up jumped the old grandfather, and pushing up his spectacles on to his forehead, he said:—

"Friends, I know most about that, so I will speak on that subject, and let Charles rest awhile." He proceeded with all the experience of years to lay bare

the natural heart, and having had his say, he called upon his grandson to continue.

This time his grandson spoke with such fire and fervour, that the poor old man could not help ejaculating again and again, "Good! Good! Good! my dear boy; tell them that over again, Charles." The grandson told them again and again; and before he had finished his discourse, there was hope that some of those present had received the truth in the heart. It mattered not which of the two preachers, on that day, was really the spiritual father of those new born souls, God got all the glory, and now the sower and the reaper rejoice together.

Mr. Spurgeon's boldness in preaching was great, but his nervousness was a complete counterpart. Sometimes before he went into the pulpit he would be quite sick, but directly he faced the people all his timidity was gone. His nervousness was like the trembling of a full-blooded racehorse before the race, it was only another form of the force which carried him along.

As an instance of this shrinking under some circumstances, the following incident may be here recorded.

One day he found himself outside the Mansion House in the City, and wished to cross the road to the Bank of England. Those of you who have been in London, have noticed the terrible pressure of traffic at this spot: so great was it on this particular day, that Mr. Spurgeon was afraid to make the attempt to cross. Just then a blind man standing by, touched him and said:—

"Please, sir, will you take me over the road to the Bank of England?"

"My dear friend," he replied, "I am afraid to cross myself."

"You can see, can't you?" said the blind man.

"Yes, I can see, but I am nervous because of the traffic."

"Ah, well!" said the blind man, "If you can see, I will trust you;" and he took hold of his sleeve.

After that last sentence, "I will trust you," Mr. Spurgeon's nervousness disappeared, and he fearlessly led the man in safety, through the maze of vehicles, to the other side. That is just how it was in his preaching; when he saw the people waiting to be led, all fear for himself vanished in the thought of their need and of their trust.

The following interesting circumstance will probably be new to most readers:—

In one of the wards of the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, a middle-aged man, a patient in that institution, was one day reading some of Mr. Spurgeon's weekly sermons.

"Did you ever hear him preach?" asked a friend.

"Yes," he answered, in his Scotch dialect, "I heard Spurgeon preach once; it was twenty-six years ago, but I remember it as if it were yesterday."

"I was living in the far North then. We had built a church, and it had been just a little bit too expensive, so that we had a big debt on our hands. Well, when we had got our minister, this debt gave him a good deal of uneasiness.

"In a little time he had occasion to go to London, and while there he took the opportunity of going to hear Spurgeon preach, and he decided to go and speak to him, lay the need of his church and congregation

before him, and ask him to come up and assist them by giving them a service. Spurgeon did not see his way to doing that; he had no connection whatever in that region.

"'However,' he said, 'if ever I come that way I will remember you.'

"Eight years after that Mr. Spurgeon had occasion to visit the neighbouring town of Dingwall, and our minister got a telegram saying that he was ready to fulfil his long-standing engagement.

"He came, and we removed the narrow pulpit, and erected a platform for him to preach from.

"Do you know what his subject was? There was a tame jackdaw about the place, and it came and perched on the platform close to Mr. Spurgeon, who motioned to the beadle not to disturb it, and stood stroking its back with his hand. His subject was *Faith*, suggested by the confidence in him displayed by the jackdaw.

"Our debt was nearly wiped out that day, and by the following year was completely disposed of. Mr. Spurgeon's presence brought in three hundred and sixty pounds."

This reminds me of another story told me by the minister to whom it occurred. He was very unsettled in his pastorate, and he told Mr. Spurgeon, who was preaching in his town, that he meant to seek a change of sphere. Mr. Spurgeon advised him to remain where he was, but to no purpose: he was determined to move. Going to see him off at the train, my friend asked Mr. Spurgeon to give him a text to comfort him.

"As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a

man that wandereth from his place," was the unexpected verse quoted in reply.

"That's a strange text to give me," the minister said.

"It is true," answered Mr. Spurgeon.

This was on a Thursday morning. Going up to London in the train, Mr. Spurgeon composed a most full and suggestive sermon on the text, and that evening he preached it in the Tabernacle; and it was afterwards published.

This readiness and resource often stood him in good stead. One Lord's-day evening, when he opened his Bible to preach, his eye lighted upon a text, and it seemed so impressed upon his mind, that he felt he must preach from it, though he had prepared a sermon on an altogether different verse. He introduced the subject, preached on the first head and the second, and was just beginning to wonder what should be his third division. He was rather perplexed at not seeing exactly what it ought to be, and was almost brought to a dead stop, when much to his relief the gas went out.

Thirdly was never given.

Mr. Spurgeon, in the darkness, began to talk about the glory of living in the light, and the horror of the outer darkness. Many people were impressed while they sat in the shadow, and listened to his unpremeditated words. Presently the gas was relighted, and the service was brought to a close.

The power of the preacher lay in his clearness and lucidity. When in Guernsey a few years ago, he preached to some of the country people who spoke French, and were not supposed to know English. After the service an old woman came up to him, and said,

"Why, you talk like a baby, you talk like a baby."

She meant to say that she had understood him, although her English was but scanty, and Mr. Spurgeon looked upon her testimony as a very true compliment, as indeed it was. Obscurity is altogether out of place in the pulpit.

A little boy who died in Baltimore recently, touched the heart of the matter. When he was eight years old, while travelling in England he was taken by his father to hear Mr. Spurgeon. The little fellow had heard it said that Mr. Spurgeon was the greatest preacher in the world. On being seated for the first time in the great Tabernacle he was all interest; and when the preacher began the service, he leaned forward with open mouth, and listened through the entire time with most intense earnestness, scarcely moving his eyes from the speaker.

When the service was over, and they got into the street, his father said, "Willie, what do you think of that man?"

He stood still and looked up into his face, and asked, "Papa, is that the greatest preacher in the world?"

"Yes, I think he is."

"Well, then," said the boy, with a glow of enthusiasm in his face, "I know how to be the greatest preacher in the world."

"How?" asked his father.

"Why, just pick out a nice chapter in the Bible, and tell just what is in it so that everybody can understand you, and nothing more."

That is what made Mr. Spurgeon the prince of preachers.

CHAPTER XVI.

A Printed Pulpit.

AS I look up at my study shelves I see thirty-eight large volumes, and many smaller ones, containing sermons by Mr. Spurgeon. There are almost three thousand of them printed, and enough still left to enable the publishers to continue the weekly issue of them for sixteen years longer.

Never, since printing was invented, has any man issued so many discourses. There are texts from every book in the Bible, and almost from every chapter; and in directness of aim, and beauty and simplicity of expression, the sermons stand unrivalled.

Week by week, for many years, the sermons have also appeared in an Australian newspaper, and for some time the discourse on Lord's-day morning was regularly cabled to America, and appeared in a newspaper there on Monday morning. They have also been translated into almost every language.

It was ever the preacher's object to put the gospel so that a child could understand it. One very grand man, who did not like his plain way of speaking, once took the trouble to write and tell him he had met with some poor negroes who were reading his sermons with great delight, and for his part he did

not wonder at it, he said ; for, in his wise opinion, the discourses were *just such as ignorant black people would be sure to relish.* No doubt he thought Mr. Spurgeon would have a terrible fit of the blues after that slap in the face, but instead thereof he was as jubilant as he knew how to be, and praised God with his whole heart, because even an enemy admitted that the Lord had taught him how to reach the

MR. SPURGEON AND HIS FIRST LONDON DEACONS.

hearts of the poor. It is very clear that what ignorant blacks can understand the intelligent whites may understand if they like ; and so Mr. Spurgeon gathered that his sermons were clear enough to be understood by anybody who was not so conceited as to darken his own mind with pride.

Dr. Livingstone read the sermons and prized them

highly. This illustrious missionary and African explorer carried some copies with him into that wild country, and after his death one of them was found in his bag. It is marked by Livingstone's own pen in the corner, "Very good. D. L." This sermon was sent home to England and given to Mr. Spurgeon, who put it safely amongst other treasured trophies.

A friend of mine, who is very methodical in his habits, for many years met on Sunday mornings a venerable old Christian on his way to his place of worship.

The old man used always to strike his hand upon his breast when he met my friend, and exclaim as he passed,

"Good morning, I've got him here, sir!"

This greeting went on for years, and my friend, who was also a friend of Mr. Spurgeon, and who accompanied him on his last drive at Menton, always thought the old man referred to Christ, whom he had in his heart.

A short time ago, however, the mystery was explained. It turned out that the old gentleman, being very deaf, was unable to hear a word his pastor said, yet he enjoyed the assembling of himself with the Lord's people. The hymns were always found for him, and the portions of Scripture, but when it came to the discourse, the old man was accustomed to produce from his breast pocket, a sermon of Mr. Spurgeon's, and read it during the remainder of the service.

That was what he meant by "I've got him here, sir!"

CHAPTER XVII.

His Ready Wit.

MOST boys like fun and plenty of it, and so did Charles Haddon Spurgeon. He carried on his shoulders the head of a wise man, and in his breast the heart of a little child. He usually wore a soft wide-awake hat, and he always hated a sleepy heart. He was full of wit and humour from his earliest years to his latest, and it often proved a power in the pulpit, and a relief in the midst of his work. It added a charm to his conversation, and gave a spice to his speeches.

Once a very sober friend asked him how he dared to use so much humour in his sacred calling.

His quick reply was, "What would you have done, brother, if the Lord had given you any?"

His ready wit often stood him in good stead, and on several occasions rescued him from an awkward difficulty.

A madman one day, having by some means gained admittance to the Tabernacle, walked straight into the vestry where Mr. Spurgeon sat all alone. Closing the door behind him, he looked at the pastor with a wild glare in his eye, and said:—

"I have come to cut your throat."

"Have you?" said Spurgeon quickly. "I wouldn't

do that, if I were you; see what a mess it would make on the carpet."

"I never thought of that," he answered; and instantly became so subdued, that he allowed himself to be led from the room like a little child.

Another demented man once gained access to him in his home, and was shown into the drawing-room. When the two were quite alone, and the door shut, he said—

"Is your name Spurgeon?"

"It is, sir," was the short reply.

"Well, you are a blackguard."

"Indeed! I was not aware of the fact," said Mr. Spurgeon.

Becoming rather frantic, and brandishing a thick stick, the man said—

"I've come to kill you; you broke my wrists the other day at Victoria Station, and you ought to die."

"I quite agree with you," answered Mr. Spurgeon; "the man who would do such a thing deserves to die; but I never saw you at Victoria Station, nor did I ever break anybody's wrist in my life."

"Your name is Spurgeon, is it not?"

"It is; I told you so before."

"Didn't you break my wrists at Victoria Station?"

"Certainly not."

"Have you a brother, then?"

"Yes, I have a brother."

"Perhaps he did it."

"I should not at all wonder," said Mr. Spurgeon, now thoroughly alarmed, and anxious to get rid of him safely. "That's more like my brother than me.

If I were you I would go and see him. Do not go to-day, and I will speak to him about it."

"No," said the poor fellow, coming back again to his first idea, with a fierce wild look. "I believe it was you, after all!" And he rose from his seat, and flourishing his massive stick in the air, he hissed—

"Have you ever been in Peckham Asylum?"

"I have not," said the preacher, in his deepest voice.

"I have," answered the man, whose appearance now left no doubt as to his condition; "and when I was there, it took six men to hold me."

"Really!"

"Are you strong?" he said, taking a step towards his intended victim.

"Terrific!" thundered Mr. Spurgeon, springing to his feet. Then, extending his arm, he said, "Sit down, sir!"

The man sat down.

"Give me that stick, sir, or I will grind you to powder. Didn't I break your wrists the other night at Victoria Station?"

Like a lamb the poor creature handed up his formidable weapon.

"Walk out of that door, sir," continued the victor. Out of the door he walked, and along the hall, followed by Mr. Spurgeon, who was not satisfied until he was outside the house, and the door locked behind him. Then, though he had been so bold at the time of need, a sudden faintness came over him as the tension of feeling was removed. But there is little doubt that he had escaped a real danger, if indeed his life had not been saved by the use of his God-given ready wit.

For sixteen years it has been my happy privilege without a break, to spend the evening following the College Conference, in company with some twenty ministers and students, at his home, and to enjoy what he called the unstringing of our bows after the labours of the week, in order that we might get into trim for the Sunday following. One of his delights on these occasions was to gather round him in the garden all his guests, and to ask one and another to relate some good story. Some of the stories on these occasions were very humorous, and no one enjoyed the fun more than himself.

At one of the gatherings of this kind, he said to Mr. Fullerton :—

"Now, Mr. Fullerton, tell us a story."

"I don't know one," was his quick reply.

"That's one," said Mr. Spurgeon, immediately.

Then turning to me, he said, "I suppose Fullerton can make you do just what you like!"

Not seeing the point at first, I said :—

"No, I don't think so, and I don't think Mr. Fullerton is the man to try to do such a thing."

"Oh, yes," said he, with a twinkle in his eye, "I know him well enough for that. He can make you do just what you like." And then his playful humour was seen.

On another occasion we were walking round the grounds in single file, because of the wet grass, and Mr. Spurgeon was leading the way. He stopped, and called out :—

"Smith, strike up a song." I started, "Hold the Fort," but when we came to the second verse, he called out :—

"Stop! Right about turn! Now you can sing 'Satan leading on,' if you like."

This made it rather hard for me, for I was now at the head of the column; after the laughter was ended, I changed the hymn, and started something else.

When Mr. Spurgeon met his intimate friends he was at his best. Into a gathering of this kind there once came a fair gentleman, with whom he was very familiar.

"Ah," said Mr. Spurgeon, "I am always delighted to see the brother with the sandy hair."

"No, no," the new comer expostulated, "it is golden."

"Yes, eighteen carat," responded Mr. Spurgeon, like a flash of lightning.

This has since appeared as a prize joke in a weekly paper, but it had its origin as I relate it.

Another instance of the same faculty of quick response may be given. Some years ago a gentleman, named Mr. Patridge, came to the Tabernacle, and was introduced to Mr. Spurgeon. The following year, he attended the College Supper, and was surprised to find that the great preacher recognized him again.

"Ah, Mr. Partridge," he said, "I am glad to see you."

"Thank you, sir," said he, "I am glad to be here once more, but" he added in rather a nervous tone, 'my name is Patridge, not Partridge."

"Ah, yes, yes," was the instant reply, "please forgive me, I won't make game of you any more."

At which Mr. Patridge heartily laughed.

Of quite another character is the following incident. An old woman, some time ago, stopped Mr. Spurgeon as he was entering the Tabernacle, and said :—

"Excuse me, sir, but could you give a poor old Christian sixpence to help her along?"

"What church do you attend?"

"The parish church, sir."

"And do you profit much there?"

"Profit, sir," she exclaimed, "why for the last six months nobody in the church has given me anything excepting one old flannel petticoat, and that's worn out. But, sir, I remember how I used to be blessed by your preaching forty years ago, when you used to preach in the open air at Vernon Square, Islington."

Mr. Spurgeon, knowing he had never preached there in his life, said to her : "Wasn't it fifty years ago you heard me preach there?"

"Yes, sir, so it was."

"Let me see," said the preacher, "don't you think it was sixty years ago since you got such a blessing under my preaching?"

"Dear me, sir, how the time does fly. Now you come to mention it, I remember it was just sixty years ago."

"I see you are an old hypocrite," Mr. Spurgeon said : "I was not born sixty years ago ; but here is sixpence for you to get a night's lodgings, and if you come begging in this place again, somebody will remember *you*. So be off."

A laughable incident is related by my friend, Rev. John Robertson, of Glasgow. He once told Mr. Spurgeon about some of the difficulties that he had to surmount when he commenced preaching.

For example, one worthy office-bearer came to church, and seated himself before the minister with one finger in each ear.

"There was a nice thing for a young preacher," he said. "What would you have done, Mr. Spurgeon?"

"I should have prayed——" began Mr. Spurgeon.

"I got my face very solemn," said Mr. Robertson, in telling the incident, "for I expected something very spiritual."

"Yes," continued Mr. Spurgeon, "I should have prayed that a fly might have alighted on his nose!"

The surprise power of true wit was possessed largely by Mr. Spurgeon. Some years ago a Government official met him at the Tabernacle on a matter of business. In the course of conversation, he said :—

"I have been told that you keep all your Institutions going by prayer."

"Practically that is so," said Mr. Spurgeon.

"I don't believe it," said this grandee in a flippant manner.

"Well," replied the preacher, "it is quite true that some people send me every year money for my various works, but I have no list of subscribers, and we have no one we could call upon and say, 'Your annual subscription has become due!'"

"Yes! yes!" said the questioner; "good people support your Institutions because they believe in you ; but that is not in answer to prayer."

"Then why do they not send their money to somebody else?" Mr. Spurgeon asked. "I do not ask them for the money. I neither advertise, nor issue begging letters ; I simply make known my requests to God, and the money comes."

"Well," replied the Government official, "I should believe more in your prayers if bad people sent you the money."

Then to change the subject, he said, "I heard you preach once, and that was quite enough for me."

"Why?"

"I came to the conclusion that you were the most insolent fellow I ever heard in a pulpit."

"Why was that?" asked Mr. Spurgeon, quietly.

"Well," he said, "I sat in the gallery, and you pointed your finger right at me, and said, 'there sits a grey-headed old sinner.'"

"Did I," said Spurgeon, "I don't remember ever having seen you in my life before. But I don't like to be rude, nor to say what is not true. Tell me—Are you a grey-headed old sinner? If you are not one, and I called you one, I will apologize."

This method of reply took the great man by surprise, and he said, somewhat confusedly, "Ah well, let it pass, I believe you are endeavouring to do a good work, here is ten pounds for you; but don't put that down to your prayers."

"Thank you," said Mr. Spurgeon, as he accepted the money, "but you have made me more than ever anxious to know whether you are a grey-headed old sinner, or not. You told me, just now, that you would believe more in my prayers if bad people gave me the money. Are you a grey-headed old sinner?"

The man who had begun to object so glibly was silent. The arrow had evidently pierced between the joints of the harness.

Another instance of this unexpected turning of a conversation came under my notice quite recently.

A young man, who had given much trouble, said, that his conscience would not let him do a certain thing.

"Ah," said Mr. Spurgeon, "you have a very good conscience."

Surprised, and pleased, the gentleman said, "I did not think you had such a good opinion of me, sir."

"Yes," said Mr. Spurgeon, "your conscience is almost as good as new, for you have not used it much."

It is needless to say that such a rebuke is not likely soon to be forgotten.

The next incident I relate, was at my own expense.

One evening, on entering the Tabernacle, the Pastor called me on to the platform, and in the presence of some of his friends said,

"Mr. Smith, I don't know what you think of yourself, but I have a very serious charge to lay against you."

My face flushed, and I tried to smile.

"Ah!" said he, "you need not smile, it is a very serious charge."

"Indeed, sir," said I, "and what is the nature of the charge?" I thought that, perhaps, some evil-disposed person had been trying to do some injury to my character.

"Well," said Mr. Spurgeon, "there are two charges, and I am not quite sure which of the two is true; perhaps you can help me to decide. You are either a thief or a conceited fellow."

"Really, sir," I exclaimed, "I trust neither is true concerning me."

"Yes," said he, "I am sorry to say it is so, it must be so, and I will prove it to you. Either that

trumpet I saw you blowing in the street just now is yours, or it is not yours. Now, if it is not yours, and you have it, you must be a thief; and if it is yours, you must be a fellow that blows his own trumpet; and any fellow that blows his own trumpet is conceited you know."

It was, indeed, a relief to me to see through his fun, and hear his explanation, which caused us all to smile.

Then, as quick as thought, and for fear his playfulness had left any sting, he revealed his true purpose in calling me on to the platform; he said,

"I am so glad to see the Lord has converted your trumpet as well as yourself; but it looks to me a poor tool. What is it worth?"

"About £2," I replied.

"Well," said he, "I will be quite willing to pay £20, or anything up to that amount, for a cornet to be used in the Lord's service. Please order one to be made, and let the instrument be ready for my birthday and the bill with it, and I will give it to you at the Stockwell Orphanage at the next Festival. Let the following inscription be engraved upon it:—'Presented to J. Manton Smith by C. H. Spurgeon, June 19, 1877. With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord the King (Psalm xcviii. 6).'"

So, you see, Mr. Spurgeon's wit and humour was quite musical to me.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Mr. Greatheart.

MANY beggars were in the habit of calling upon Mr. Spurgeon; they seemed to have discovered that he never refused anyone unless he knew them to be downright impostors. Amongst the professional mendicants he was known by the name of "Soft Tommy." A friend once informed him of this fact, but he only smiled and said, "Never mind; I would rather be remembered as 'Soft Tommy' than 'Hard Jack.'"

His sympathy with suffering was immense. Few knew of his many acts of kindness towards the tried and afflicted.

One day a friend sent him tickets for Handel's Oratorio at the Crystal Palace, but he refused them because he was too busy to attend; yet that very day he found time to visit a poor old man in one of the lowest parts of London, who had been twenty-six years bed-ridden. Again and again did he call and see this poor afflicted man, and never without some delicacy for the invalid. This sufferer told me he had never seen Mr. Spurgeon in his life till he visited him in his affliction; then his presence seemed like the presence of an angel. Beyond myself and Mr. Potier, few people knew of the great preacher's visits to

this afflicted creature, and this is only a sample of many other cases.

Mr. Spurgeon was eminently approachable. He did not keep people at arm's length. Some years ago, on a cold winterly morning, a neat-looking woman with a little baby in her arms sat crying on the Tabernacle steps when Mr. Spurgeon entered the gates.

He enquired why she was weeping.

"Come with me into the Tabernacle, my good woman," he said, "and warm your baby beside a nice fire."

"I have been inside, sir," she answered, "and I have been rudely sent away. I am almost broken-hearted because they won't let me see Mr. Spurgeon, for I have a very special message for him."

"Have you?" said Mr. Spurgeon. "Then I am sure you shall see him. Come and show me who would not let you see him. I am Mr. Spurgeon, and I will listen to all you have to say to me. Don't fret; bring the baby into my vestry, and we will soon put matters right for you."

The woman was overjoyed to find her wish was granted, and said, "Oh, sir, never mind about the rude man. I am more than repaid for all my trouble, now that I see you face to face."

"Well, what do you want to see me about?"

"I am a member of the Church of England," she said, "and I live some seventy miles from here. I have never seen you before, but I have read your sermons, and *The Sword and the Trowel*, and I felt sure you were a kind man. My dear boy some years ago commenced to save up his money in a box for your

Orphanage. And just before he died he said, 'Mother, be sure you go to London with my money-box, and see Mr. Spurgeon yourself, and tell him I have saved my money for his Orphanage,' and, sir," she said, "I have brought the box, to carry out his wish." When the contents of the box were counted they amounted to several pounds.

The good woman, who is still alive, told me that when the servant repulsed her she was just on the point of returning home with very hard thoughts of Mr. Spurgeon. "After all," she was saying to herself, "he is not a good, kind man." You see she was judging the master by the servant; and I fear my Master Jesus is often misjudged by the world in the same way because of the inconsistencies of his followers. I wish people would but look at the Master Himself. When the woman saw Mr. Spurgeon instead of his subordinate, she went home with a glad heart. She still remains a devoted friend to his Institutions, and again came to London to pay her last tribute of respect at the funeral of the man whom she had first met under these circumstances.

Quite an opposite episode to this comes to my memory. One evening a stranger stopped Mr. Spurgeon on the Tabernacle steps, and said:

"Do you think I could see Mr. Spurgeon to-night?"

"I know he is very busy," he replied. "What do you wish to see him about?"

"That's my business," said the man, "and I am not going to tell you. I want to get a private interview with him. He is a great man, and I hear he has influence with the Queen."

"I know that's not true," said the unrecognized

pastor; "he is neither a great man, nor has he any influence whatever with the Queen; and unless you tell me your business, you must go off about your business."

With a hearty laugh, Mr. Spurgeon afterwards told how the man turned on him furiously, and said, "I wonder who you think you are? It's like your impudence to say he is not a great man, and that he has no influence with the Queen. I suppose you're like the rest of 'em about the place, depending on Mr. Spurgeon for your bread and cheese!"

With this parting shot he stumped out of the building, without either stating his business, or knowing to whom he had been speaking.

The following incident, as far as I am aware, has never been recorded, but it is well worthy of being known in honour of the great-heartedness, kindness, and humility which characterized it. In a quiet little village in the county in which I was born, there stands by the road-side a small Baptist Chapel. The people are too poor to support a pastor, and for many years the Sunday services have been conducted by different ministers. A godly old gardener, who has recently gone to glory, undertook to find the preachers, and a pious couple, in a cottage, promised to entertain them every week from Saturday till Monday. Their cottage was small, and their food plain, but the warmth of their hearts and their generous welcome, more than made up for their scanty store. All who served the little church felt well repaid by their gratitude and love.

The old gardener took it into his head that he would like to get Mr. Spurgeon to preach to them, and wrote expressing his wish.

Mr. Spurgeon sent a gently worded refusal.

He wrote again.

Again he got a refusal.

He wrote a third time, with the same result, and then he told Mr. Spurgeon that he would continue writing until he came.

No notice was taken of this letter, but at regular intervals an application came from the persistent old man, until scores of letters had been received from him. Mr. Spurgeon, having heard from other sources of the genuineness of the man, at length consented to visit them on a week-day. He was then informed of the old couple's constant hospitality to the preachers, and he expressed his desire to be entertained by them. However, when the bills announcing his coming were posted, they attracted the attention of the village squire, who immediately wrote to Mr. Spurgeon, offering him hospitality for the day.

He received a reply thanking him for his kindness, and informing him how the godly old couple had for years entertained the preachers week by week. Mr. Spurgeon asked the Squire to do him the personal favour of sending supplies of food into the cottage, and joining him there to dinner and tea.

His request was granted, and the old folks' hearts were glad in being permitted to entertain Mr. Spurgeon and his friend, the Squire, in their humble abode.

The brick floor of the cottage was scrubbed and reddened, the wooden chairs were polished, and the corner cupboard was made to shine almost like a mirror. In the midst of all, the old man and his wife sat at their own table, dressed in their Sunday best, enjoying the feast which had been supplied, and

having as their guests, Mr. Spurgeon, the Squire, and the godly old gardener; the servants from the Hall waiting on the happy party.

It was my privilege to preach in the same place, and to share the old people's hospitality, some two years after this event. The fragrance of Mr. Spurgeon's visit was still fresh in the hearts of these old folks, and tears of joy trickled down their faces as they gave me a detailed account of it. The corner cupboard was then unlocked, and a cup and saucer carefully taken from the shelf, and placed before me on the table.

"There, sir," said this good old woman, "that is the very cup and saucer out of which Mr. Spurgeon had his tea; it has never been used since; but in honour of your visit to us, I am going to give you your tea in it; but be sure you don't break it."

Since then these two saints have been called home. Perhaps they have met their guests of that day in glory ere now, and who can say but they may have talked together about the cup of tea? A cup of cold water, given in Christ's name, commands a blessing; and their humble service, and Mr. Spurgeon's humble spirit, must both have been pleasing to the Saviour whom they all loved.

CHAPTER XIX.

The School of the Prophets.

OF the Pastors' College I should like to say much more than the pages of this book will permit me, for some of my happiest days were spent within its walls.

It was very dear to Mr. Spurgeon's heart. He not only himself preached, but he trained other men to preach too, and stinted neither time nor money in the service. At one stage of the history of the College, he was on the point of selling his horse and carriage in order to carry it on, and often Mrs. Spurgeon has by economies in the home, provided the funds to tide over a hard pinch.

In answer to prayer, this and all Mr. Spurgeon's other projects have been sustained, and now that his service on earth is over, these works must be still carried on. Some of the young people of to-day should, in future years come forward to support the various institutions which will perpetuate his memory.

A minister tells how one day while he was at the College Prayer Meeting, Mr. Spurgeon put his head in at the door and said,

"Brethren, pray for help, we have no money to carry on the work."

They prayed, and in about twenty minutes, Mr.

Spurgeon again appeared, and in triumphant tones he exclaimed as he held up a cheque,

"Help has come, brethren, a gentleman has just called with this. Now let us praise God together."

This is only a sample of the life of faith which sustained and inspired his every enterprise.

In the evangelistic work which, in company with a band of brethren, I have been permitted to share, he ever took the deepest interest, and was always anxious to have the latest tidings of success. Often he gave us words of cheer and counsel. I personally received a token of his warm-hearted thoughtfulness, only a few days before he passed away.

A certain newspaper, in speaking of our work, had compared Mr. Fullerton and myself to the piano and banjo, and a copy of the paper had reached Mr. Spurgeon, in Menton. With reference to this, he wrote to me, on the last day of 1891, a letter full of cheerfulness and vigour. Part of it refers to business, and part to his own health, but amongst other things, he says :—

"Keep on with that banjo. Keep to the same old tune. They cannot call you "the Bones."

Then, after a few genial and generous compliments, he continues, "I conceive that your work is second to none in real usefulness. To the Lord be all the glory! I am very grateful for help as to *The Sword and the Trowel*."

Mr. Spurgeon was a personal friend to his students. He seemed to know every man who entered the College, through and through. He took the deepest interest in each of them, and forgot nobody.

At this present moment, I see, lying on my study

table, a long letter of encouragement to a young friend of mine who lately left College for the Mission Field. The following extract will show how he kept in touch with the brethren in their service for Christ. The letter is dated Menton, December, 1891, and is the more appropriate as it is addressed to a farmer's son. Mr. Spurgeon says:—

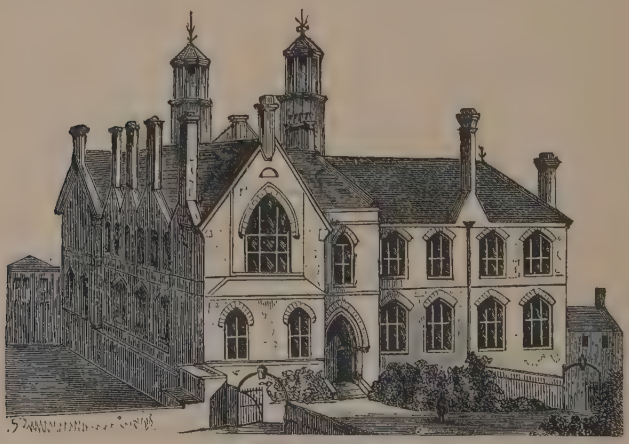
"The Lord himself be with you in South Africa. Keep to the old Gospel. Live near to God. May Christ live in you! I shall hear of you, I trust, if I don't see you. Stick to your work, Doggett! Never say die! You have a tough piece of ground to plough, keep the share bright and sharp and go straight as a line to the end of the field."

To give a bird's-eye view of the work accomplished by the school of the prophets, I cannot do better than quote the descriptive words of its Principal, Gracey:—

"The company of the preachers is vast, scattered in every land and encircling the globe. At home, they take their stations from Wick to Redruth, from Norfolk to Wales. They minister to the largest congregations in the Metropolis. They have made their own almost every Baptist pulpit in the Isle of Wight, and are planted in Jersey, Guernsey, and the Isle of Man. Their labours are giving new hope to the churches of Ireland. They are pursuing missions in Spain, and at Turin and Naples. They are among the few brave men who testify for Christ among the fierce Mohammedans of North Africa. The banks of the Congo hold the sacred dust of some, and witness the energy and devotion of others. The growing kingdom of South Africa has a Pastors' College man in almost every important town. Away to the South,

throughout New Zealand and Tasmania, and from Brisbane to Western Australia, they have been doing, and are doing, good service for the Saviour. They have carried the gospel to the Falklands, the Bahamas, and Jamaica. They occupy pastorates from Rio de Janeiro to Canada, and from New England to the frontier States of the far West. They have gone as missionaries and pastors to India; ministered as Christ's servants to the famine-stricken peasants of China; and carried the torch of saving truth to their neighbours of Japan.

"Their testimony thus, like the roll of a British drum, goes round the world, and with a continuous concert of prayer—for a Prayer Union links all together—that the Great Head of the Church would grant ever-increasing times of refreshing from his presence. So greatly has God owned and blessed the Pastors' College, that almost literally the words are true of it, 'The little one has become a thousand.'"



THE PASTORS' COLLEGE.

CHAPTER XX.

The Nursery of the Church.

A GREAT man always has a child's heart. Mr. Spurgeon was a great man. Nowhere was this seen more than in his love and care for the children. He always tenderly sought the welfare of the lambs of the flock. Though he was a Baptist he did not teach adult baptism; he enforced the baptism of believers, and a boy has been known to join the Tabernacle Church as early as nine years old.

It is quite in keeping with his character that his life should be written specially for young people, and therefore I am glad to accede to the publishers' request and write it.

My friend, Mr. Pearce, who is superintendent of the Sunday Schools connected with the Tabernacle, was often cheered by the Pastor's interest in that department of the work. What a hive of bees these schools seem, as seen on the afternoon of a Lord's-day! The school is truly the nursery of the church. Hundreds have been led to know and trust the Saviour by its means. On special occasions, I have had the joy of addressing almost ten thousand little people who can be gathered together from the various schools around the Tabernacle.

Lord save my little friend

Westwood
Norwood
1890

Dear Young Friend

I am anxious that the little ones should be saved I heard a number of ministers pray for them dear boys & girls, & after they had done I said to myself "I will write a letter to their children, & try to make them think about Jesus" What a joy it would be if you dear were, while yet a child, to be saved by the Lord Jesus He can wash away sin, & by his Holy Spirit he can change the heart & he can do it quite as easily in the young as in the grown-up people If we seek salvation by Jesus Christ, God will give it

In the Bible we are told to believe
– that is TRUST. We trust Jesus
to save us, and he does save us
I want you to trust him now

I hope you will have a long and
useful life, & trust in Christ will
be the sure way to help you to live usefully
by Year. But you may die while
yet young, and then, through
faith in Jesus, you will enter heaven
to be glorified with the Lord for
ever

They that seek me early shall find me.
That is the text for you. I hope you
will seek at once, & find Jesus
at once I may never see you here,
but I hope I shall meet you, & your
dear parents, in the land of the
blessed

Jesus with my best wishes,

C. H. Spurgeon

Many years ago a mother ventured into the Tabernacle, to hear the popular preacher, and during the prayer, the baby in her arms began to cry aloud. Mr. Spurgeon at once quelled the disturbed congregation and comforted the heart of the troubled mother, by asking God's blessing to rest on the child, whose very cry was a prayer for something that it lacked language to express.

The references he made to this child, and the many lessons he drew from its cry were very memorable, and the mother never failed to impress upon the child, as it grew up into life, that Mr. Spurgeon once prayed specially for him in the great Tabernacle. When the boy had reached manhood he came to join the Church, and said that the thought of the prayer offered for him, when he was a baby, had been so impressed upon his life that it had led him to Christ.

At the College Conference in 1889, Dr. Usher, of Belfast, prayed earnestly that the children of the ministers present might all become the Lord's. This heart-breathed prayer was taken up at once by Mr. Spurgeon, who asked for the names and addresses of every unconverted child whose father was a member of the Conference, in order that he might write to them. In a few weeks he had written and posted a letter to every child whose name he had received.

The two letters that were sent are here reproduced, in the hope that many may solemnly read them as a message from the hand which now is still.

The very young children received the letter on the pages preceding, and those who were older received the second.

Two of my own dear boys were led into the path

of peace by this means, and I have had other most pleasing proofs from some of the fathers of these children as to the value of those epistles. One minister reports that both his twin daughters were brought to the Lord by them, and another speaks of his boy who was led into the light by the agency of the letter, and who is just now, as I write, about to be baptized.

When my eldest son, George, was about to make profession of his faith in this way, Mr. Spurgeon said to him, before he went down into the water—

"George, my lad, your father, who is now away in Sheffield, sings the Gospel, why should not you do the same? Come, sing us a verse now."

I need not tell you this little fellow, only fourteen years old, was somewhat dismayed at the request, but with God-given courage and guidance, he walked to the front of the platform, and sang:—

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'Come unto Me and rest;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
Thy head upon My breast.'
I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary, and worn, and sad:
I found in Him a resting-place,
And He has made me glad."

This is the only resting-place for either a child or grown-up person. I hope you could sing this verse truly.

Mr. Spurgeon sometimes preached special sermons to children. One of these is entitled, "A Double Knock at the Door of the Young," and I think you would like to read it. It has been blessed to many.

Westwood, June 19. 90
Norwood.

Blank for this letter

My Dear

I was a little while ago at a meeting for prayer where a large number of ministers were gathered together The subject of prayer was "our children It soon brought the tears to my eyes to hear those good fathers pleading with God for their sons & daughters As they went on entreating the Lord to save their families, my heart seemed ready to burst with strong desire that it might be even so Then I thought I will write to those sons & daughters, & remind them of their parents' prayers

Dear , you are highly privileged in having parents who pray for you Your name is known in the courts of heaven Your case has been laid before the throne of God

Do you not pray for yourself If you do not do so why not? If other people value your soul can it be right for you to neglect it? All the entreaties & wrestlings of yr father will not save you if you never seek the Lord yourself You know this

You do not intend to cause grief to dear mother & father but you do So long as you are not saved they can never rest However obedient & sweet & kind you may be, they will never feel happy about you until you believe in the Lord

Jesus Christ, to find everlasting salvation

Think of this. Remember how much you have already sinned, none can wash you but Jesus. When you grow up you may become very sinful, none can change your nature, make you holy but the Lord Jesus, through his Spirit.

You need what father & mother seek for you, or you need it NOW. Why not seek it at once? I heard a father pray, "Lord, save our children, and save them young." It is never too soon to be safe, never too soon to be happy, never too soon to be holy. Jesus loves to receive the very young ones.

You cannot save yourself, but the great Lord Jesus can save you. Ask him to do it. "He that asketh, receiveth." Then trust in Jesus to save you. He can do it, for he died & rose again that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life. Come & tell Jesus you have sinned; seek forgiveness; trust in Him for it, & be sure that you are saved.

Then imitate our Lord. Be at home as Jesus was at Nazareth. Yours will be a happy home, if dear father & mother will feel that the dearest wish of their heart has been granted them.

I pray you to think of heaven & hell; for in one of those places you will live for ever. Meet me in heaven! Meet me at once at the mercy-seat. Run up stairs & pray to the great Father, through Jesus Christ.

Yours very lovingly, C. H. Spurgeon.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Orphan Homes.

THIS record would not be complete if an account of Mr. Spurgeon's Institution for the Fatherless was left out, yet space forbids me to say much about it.

Mr. Spurgeon's many works *grew*, none of them were manufactured. The Orphanage is a wonderful example of this. A clergyman's widow, having a strong desire to help poor fatherless children, and believing thoroughly in Mr. Spurgeon as a good and a wise man, wrote to him, saying that she would give him £20,000 as a nest egg, if he would found an Orphanage for Fatherless boys.

He called on her, and when he saw the size of the house in which she lived and the humble surroundings of the place, he thought it could not be £20,000 that she wished to give.

So he said, "I have called to see you concerning the £200 you wrote me about."

"Two hundred, Mr. Spurgeon!" said the lady; "did I say £200? it is £20,000 I want to give to you."

"Well," he replied, "you certainly did say £20,000, but I thought perhaps you had put a nought or two too many."

After receiving the £20,000, Mr. Spurgeon resolved

to found the Orphanage, and began to pray for the necessary direction and equipment. God heard his prayer and blessed his efforts so greatly, that, in a short time, there were cottage homes erected for the accommodation of 250 boys, with a large dining-hall and play-hall. The place was opened to all denominations and no votes were required to gain admission, the greatest need always having the first claim for admission. The Orphanage has now grown to such an extent, that it is able to shelter, clothe, and educate within its gates, 250 girls and 250 boys. I should like to tell you so much more about the Orphanage but I have no room, because I want to insert the following narrative.

Mr. Spurgeon's last private visit there was on Tuesday, September 23rd, 1890. He was very weak and ill at the time, and felt glad to lean on the arm of my friend, Mr. F. G. Ladds, the Secretary, who was once a little boy in the Orphanage himself, and who, while yet a lad, trusted Christ and became a member of the Tabernacle church.

The day was a very wet and stormy one, and it was impossible to go all round the grounds.

"There was nothing for it but to turn into the play-hall, where the boys gave tremendous cheers at our advent," says Mr. Spurgeon in recording the incident, "cheers almost as deafening as the thunder which responded to them. Go out we could not, for the shower was swollen into a deluge, so I resolved to turn the season to account. I had to disappoint the little girls; but their turn will come another day."

Alas! that "other day" never came.

"A chair was forthcoming, and there I sat, the centre

of a dense throng of juvenile humanity, which could scarcely be kept off from a nearness which showed the warmth of their reception of their friend. Our artist, who, standing in the throng, made a hurried sketch. could not be afforded space enough to put in the hundreds of boys. It was certainly a melting moment

as to heat, and fresh air was not abundant; but anything was better than the storm outside.

"Flash after flash made everybody feel sober, and prompted me to talk with the boys about that freedom from fear which comes through faith in the Lord Jesus.

The story was told of a very young believer, who was in his uncle's house one night during a tremendous tempest. The older folk were all afraid; but he had really trusted himself with the Lord Jesus, and he did not dare to fear. The baby was upstairs, and nobody was brave enough to fetch it down because of a big window on the stairs. This lad went up to the bedroom, and fetched the baby to its mother, and then read a psalm, and prayed with his relatives, who were trembling with fear. There was real danger for a stack was set on fire a short distance away: but the youth was as calm as on a summer's day of sunshine, not because he was naturally brave, but because he truly trusted in the Lord."

I daresay you will guess who this young believer was! though Mr. Spurgeon was too modest to say. But he continues the narrative.

"While I was thus speaking, the darkness increased, and the storm overhead seemed brooding over us with black wings. It was growing dark before its hour. Most appropriately, one of the boys suggested a verse, which all sang sweetly and reverently—

> 'Abide with me! fast falls the eventide;
> The darkness thickens; Lord, with me abide;
> When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
> Help of the helpless, O abide with me!'

This ended, there followed a word about the ground of the believer's trust: he was forgiven, and therefore dreaded no condemnation; he was in his heavenly Father's hand, and therefore feared no evil. If we were quarrelling with God, and had all our sins resting upon our guilty heads, we might be afraid to die; yes, and ever afraid to live; but when reconciled by

the death of His Son, we said farewell to fear. With God against us we are in a state of war; but with God for us we dwell in perfect peace. Here came flashes of lightning and peals of thunder which might well make us start; but no one was afraid. It is true we all felt awed, but we were restful, and somehow there was a quiet but general cry for '*perfect peace.*' On inquiring what this meant, I was answered by all the boys singing right joyfully—

> 'Like a river glorious is God's perfect peace,
> Over all victorious in its bright increase,
> Perfect, yet it floweth fuller every day;
> Perfect, yet it groweth deeper all the way.
> Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are fully blest,
> Finding as he promised, perfect peace and rest.'

This sung, we covered our faces reverently, and the boys were very silent, while I lifted up my voice in prayer. Then we opened our eyes again, and it was very dark, as if night had come before its time. While the flames of fire leaped in through the windows and skylights, the noise of the rain upon the roof and the tremendous thunder scarcely permitted me to say much upon Jesus as being our peace, through His bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. Yet, as well as I could, I set forth the cross of Christ as the place of peace-making, peace-speaking, and peace-finding, both for boys and men; and then we all sang, to the accompaniment of the storm-music—

> 'How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
> In a believer's ear!
> It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
> And drives away his fear.'

Never did the power of that Name to drive away fear

appear more sweetly. To me the words came with a soothing, cheering power, which filled me with intense delight, and so we very joyfully and peacefully sang the third verse—

> 'Dear Name! the rock on which I build,
> My shield and hiding-place;
> My never-failing treasury, filled
> With boundless stores of grace.'

Just as we came to 'my shield and hiding-place,' there was a peculiarly blue flash, with a sort of rifle-crack, as if something very close to us had been struck. The boys looked at one another, but went on, with subdued tones, singing of the 'boundless stores of grace.' Teachers and others were mixed with the little army of boys, but we were all welded together in common emotion. I then reminded them that to such a Protector we must give our heart's love. It was a duty to love one so good as the Lord Jesus, but even more a delight to do so, since He gave Himself for us, and, by bearing our punishment, delivered us from all harm. As if by instinct, some one led off—

> 'My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine,
> For Thee all the follies of sin I resign;
> My gracious Redeemer, my Saviour art Thou,
> If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.'

Here was a good opportunity to press home the question, Is this true of each one of you? The great desire of all who conduct the Orphanage is to lead you to take Jesus for your gracious Redeemer, that so you may love Him. Oh, that you loved Him *now!* It may be that, if you leave us unsaved, the Lord will yet bring you in; but it would be far better

that you should go out from us ready for the battle of life, and covered with a holy armour, so that you may not be wounded by the arrows of sin. Then I picked out Mr. May, who is employed at the Orphanage, and bade him tell the boys about himself. May was a boy with us at the Orphanage—a restless spirit, and so he went to sea, and, after many hardships and adventures, he was converted to God at Malta, and

THE SPURGEONS' ORPHANAGE GATE.

then came back to us, and we found him a post at his old school. As the lads knew the most of his story, May did not say very much ; and what he did say was rather overborne by the rain on the roof, which sounded like ten thousand drums. The thunder added its trumpet voice, and only allowed us pauses of silence. I went on with the talk till there came a

burst of thunder loud and long. I stopped, and bade the children listen to the voice of the Lord. We all hearkened to it with awe and wonder. Then I reminded them of Psalm xxix: 'The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever.' I told them how often I had sung to to myself Dr. Watts' verses—

'The God that rules on high,
And thunders when He please,
That rides upon the stormy sky,
And manages the seas:

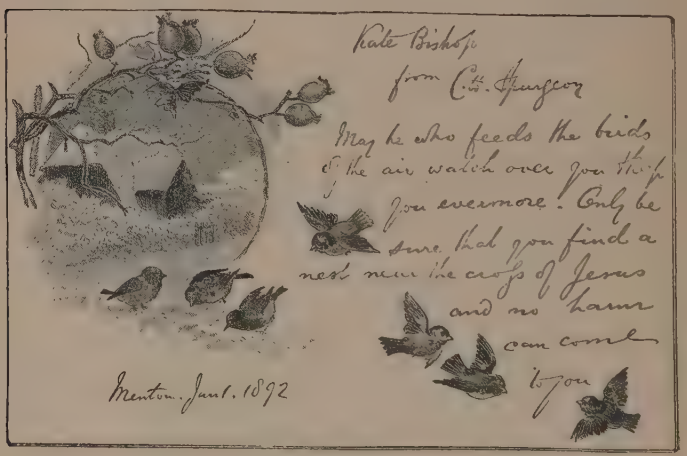
'This awful God is ours,
Our Father and our love;
He shall send down His heavenly powers
To carry us above.

'There shall we see His face,
And never, never sin;
There from the rivers of His grace,
Drink endless pleasures in.'

As they did not know the old-fashioned tune 'Falcon Street,' to which I had been wont to sing the words, we kept quiet till, suddenly, there came another roll of drums in the march of the God of armies; and then, as an act of worship, we adoringly sang together, with full force, the words of the doxology—

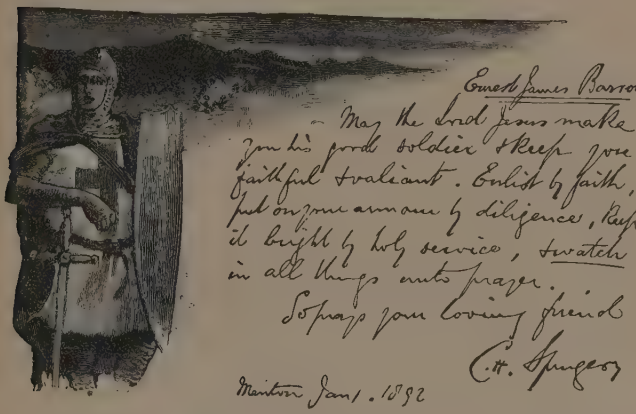
'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise him all creatures here below,
Praise him above, ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.'

"This was a grand climax. The heavens themselves seemed to think so, for there were no more thunderclaps of such tremendous force. I need not write more. The storm abated. I hurried off to see enquirers at the Tabernacle, but not till one and another had said to me, 'The boys will never forget this. It will abide with them throughout eternity.' SO BE IT, FOR CHRIST'S SAKE AMEN."


Kate Bishop
from C. H. Spurgeon
May he who feeds the birds
of the air watch over you this
day evermore! Only be
sure that you find a
nest near the cross of Jesus
and no harm
can come
to you
Menton. Jan. 1892

Mr. Spurgeon was a true friend to all the orphans. When he was at Menton, one of the boys and one of the girls wrote to him on behalf of the others, wishing him a happy Christmas, on what proved to be the last Christmas day he spent on earth. In reply they had each a card, tenderly and beautifully written. A fac-simile of each is given in the hope that many of the girls and boys who read this book may learn to trust Him who cares for the birds, and begin to fight

His battles all through their lives. Then, whether orphans or not, they may rejoice in knowing that they are children of the Father in heaven.


Ernest James Barron
May the Lord Jesus make
you his good soldier & keep you
faithful & valiant. Enlist by faith,
put on your armour by diligence, keep
it bright by holy service, & watch
in all things unto prayer.
So prays your loving friend
C. H. Spurgeon
Mentone Jan. 1892

Each year, at the Orphanage, there is a Founders' Day and Festival, which is arranged to come as near Mr. Spurgeon's birthday, June 19th, as possible. Thousands of friends gather on these occasions, and anyone who wishes both to see the Orphan Homes, and to hear about them, cannot do better than be present at this annual *fête*.

MRS. C. H. SPURGEON.

CHAPTER XXII.

Nightingale Lane and Beulah Hill.

JANUARY is a marked month in the life of C. H. Spurgeon. In January he entered upon the new life : in January he entered upon the glorified life : and in January he entered upon home life. On January 8th, 1856, in the presence of two thousand people, Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon linked her life with his.

Two houses in London will be long pointed out as having been occupied by "England's Greatest Preacher." One is in Nightingale Lane, Clapham, and though the sweet songsters of the night have long since departed from it, the man of God, who for years lived there, often caused weary hearts to sing for joy. Twelve years ago Mr. and Mrs. Spurgeon removed to Norwood, and at "Westwood," on Beulah Hill, the same quiet but busy life was lived as in the presence of God. The home indeed was like a bit of the land of Beulah of which John Bunyan speaks in his *Pilgrim's Progress.*

Mr. Spurgeon's home life was most beautiful. His tastes were simple and unaffected, and there were none of the airs of a great man about him. Perfect order reigned everywhere, and when anyone entered the home, a feeling of restfulness pervaded the heart

at once. There was no extravagance, but everything was in perfect taste. The gardens and grounds were ever the delight of the great preacher, and he was perfectly happy when he was conducting some honoured guest round his domain. With delight he would point out the beauties of flower and fern, and describe the features of the scenery, of which a wide expanse could be seen from his favoured position on the top of the hill.

The cows in the meadow were an ornament to the place. These were consecrated to the Lord's service, and the proceeds from the sale of the milk was devoted by Mrs. Spurgeon to the support of a Bible-woman and a nurse. "Punch," Mr. Spurgeon's pug dog, was always a great source of amusement; many a hearty laugh I have heard his master give, when the dog gave a special performance of his tricks for the benefit of visitors.

Twin sons were born in the home, and both are now preachers of the Gospel, and are workmen who need not to be ashamed. This fact was a great joy to their father's heart; and though he did not believe grace ran in the blood, he rejoiced that the godly line of ministers was to be sustained in his family when he was gone. When the twins were boys they were photographed each year, and in the entrance hall, at "Westwood," a large frame contains these pictures, showing the gradual development from boyhood to manhood. Mr. Spurgeon sometimes used this as an illustration of the progress which should be seen in the life and character of those who are born into the family of God.

For very many years Mrs. Spurgeon was an invalid,

and as her dear husband, himself a great sufferer, said, "There is no blessing more to be desired of the Lord than health, except it be sickness." In the sick-chamber Mrs. Spurgeon has learned to delight herself in the Lord; and the gentleness and fragrance which come from such discipline are prominent in her life. In later years she has been somewhat stronger, and I have heard her say that she has taken up her abode in "Thanksgiving Corner." Her whole life is full of praise.

"The Book Fund," which she inaugurated, is known all over the world. Many a minister of the Gospel has been cheered by its means with a gift of books; the yearly reports, and the volume which includes many of them, *Ten Years of my Life in the Service of the Book Fund*, are full of beauty and grace.

I cannot do better than let the two dear sons themselves speak of their father and his home. Pastor Charles Spurgeon, who is the minister of a large church at Greenwich, in speaking at the College Conference, bore a noble testimony to his glorified father.

"Most of my home training I owe," he said, "to my beloved mother. Father was thereby set free the more for his sacred calling, but nevertheless that very fact has had a wonderful influence over me. His active life always impressed me much, even in my youngest days.

"He was the truest and the kindest father as regards the correction of his children. If every parent acted as he did, probably there would be better boys about. The first recollection I have of him was on one occasion when, returning from the Continent with

mother, the two boys having been left at home in charge of the cook, as a very great treat we sat up to welcome them.

"During their absence, one of the two boys, on a certain Sunday afternoon, when a very limited portion of dessert had been allowed, thought he would like a little more, and so he helped himself. You can imagine who it was. I need not say it was not my brother. I was found out in that petty larceny, and

MR. SPURGEON'S SON CHARLES.

was punished accordingly by the cook. I suffered greatly at her hands ; but, having most truly repented, I received from her a promise that, upon the return of my parents, my offence should not be mentioned. I was grieved ; my heart was broken that I had done it, as much because I feared lest I should grieve my parents as it was that I had stolen some nuts.

"When they returned, however, the first question asked was,

"'Well, Ellen, and how are the boys? Have they been good?'

"'Yes, sir,' she said, but with a little bit of doubt about it.

"They knew very well what it meant; for they said directly,

"'Has not Charlie been good?'

"The question was answered, I am sorry to say, in the negative, and the whole story of taking some half a dozen nuts out of the sideboard cupboard was told, and Charlie was sent to bed with these words,

"'I will come up and see you presently.'

"That was all. That was quite enough, and I went upstairs with a very heavy heart; and yet, because it was my father, I did not fear him. When he came in at the door, I was already in bed. It was somewhat late for my childhood days—about half-past nine.

"He entered and said, 'I find that you have already been punished for what you did wrong, so go to sleep,' and he gave me a kiss, and went downstairs.

"That was his trait all through his life; he was most just, and true, and upright; and if he thought that any injury had been done to anyone, or that he had made a mistake concerning any, he would go out of his way to put it right, and spend any amount of money to do it. And I could back these words up with facts.

"A little further on, in my life's history, I was at school at Brighton. I went there for several reasons. I believe that the first was to learn, but the second was to play, and I preferred the second to the first; and sometimes the lessons were not altogether well prepared. I had a letter from my father, for the

master had written complaining of me, and father said,

"'Charlie, I shall have to tell the master to *cane* you, if you are *able*.'"

"Well, that dose of physic went down all the sweeter because there was a drop of honey in it, and I believe that I was a better boy, and stuck to my books the more because of the way in which he put it. It made me more capable, because I was afraid of being caned. So my father was kind in his corrections."

When the son sent a letter from school speaking of a prayer meeting that he had started in the master's drawing room, he received this beautiful little note. His father said :—

"Dear boy, I should like you to *preach*, but it is best that you *pray*. Many a preacher has proved a castaway, but never one who has truly learned to pray."

When son Charles desired to give himself wholly to the Lord's work, he received another letter from his father, which I commend to all the young men whose eye this page may catch. It contains the highest wisdom, and if followed out will make any life happy. Mr. Spurgeon wrote : "I am glad you desire to do something for the Lord, and shall be still more so when you actually set about it. Time flies, and the opportunity for doing good flies with it. However diligent you may be in the future, you can only do the work of 1875 in 1875 ; and if you leave it undone now, it will be undone to all eternity.

"The diligent attention which you give to business, the careful purity of your daily life, and your concern to do common things in a right spirit, are all a real

service to the Lord. The hours in which your earthly calling is industriously followed for Christ's sake, are real hours of work for Jesus; but still this cannot satisfy you, or, at least, I hope it cannot.

"As redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus, you feel that you belong to Him, and you long to show your love to Him by actions directly meant to extend His kingdom, and gather in souls whom He loves to bless. When once such efforts are commenced they become easier, and a kind of hunger to do more seizes upon the heart.

"It is not toil, but pleasure; and if God blesses what we do, it rises from being a common pleasure to become a sacred delight. 'Whatsoever your hand findeth to do, do it with your might.' It is not for me to suggest what, for the act of invention must be left to yourself, and half the pleasure lies in it."

"With such words as those," says his son, in reading this letter, "I can assure you it was not long before I decided to go and take up work for Jesus Christ, feeling also sure that he that had written thus would pray even more earnestly than before that the humble worker might be richly blessed."

Mr. Spurgeon was a very busy man. Not a moment of his life was wasted. Once when the son had begun to ride a bicycle, his father asked him:

"However do you manage to keep on, my boy?"

"Well, if I do not go on, father, I go off," he answered.

"That is about the same with me," he said; "I must keep at it, else I should stop."

And until the very end he "kept at it," spending his strength to the last ounce in the service of his Master.

When he unbent in the midst of his friends or family, or when out on a holiday, he was at his best. Fun and frolic would follow as from the heart of a child; "But," his son says, "even in the midst of this fun there was some amount of instruction conveyed. He would sometimes say:

"'Now, boys, let us see what we can say about these trees;' and then we would try to make some riddles up, and he would make riddles about all manner of things. Then he would turn and try to make us remember all the different stones and rocks, and so forth. And if we were going through old ruins of castles, abbeys, and the like, he would tell us about them, for he seemed to know everything. He was a walking encyclopædia.

"When we went through the churches in Paris, he seemed to know every picture, every tomb. Whenever we spent these happy holidays, I preferred it to going to school, and I wished that he had always been my tutor; for I believe that I should have learned a great deal more from him than from anybody else. I do thank God for having had such a father, so full of information, and so gracious in imparting it."

On one occasion in Scotland the father and sons were guessing about trees, and saying which they liked best. When son Tom's turn came, he went up to Mr. Spurgeon, and said:

"Yew, father."

His father never forgot that tender touch which conveyed a world of 'ove.

Pastor Thomas Spurgeon for his health's sake has been compelled to make his home in a warmer climate. Both in Australia and in New Zealand his

name is a household word. His preaching has been so acceptable that, with God's blessing, he has been enabled to build a magnificent Tabernacle in Auckland.

When the news of his father's death was cabled to New Zealand (the beautiful message to the son was, "Father in heaven, mother resigned,") a Memorial Service was convened in the Tabernacle, which he had been the means of erecting, and on that solemn occasion he gave the following testimony :—

MR. SPURGEON'S SON THOMAS.

"The man who was so good to other people's children was, you may be sure, a good father to his own. So busy a life prevented him from taking an active part in the upbringing of his boys—besides, my precious mother was the best possible trainer. We learned from father's example rather than by his precept. And if his home life might be told it would prove as striking as his public life. I fear me we

have not profited by it as we should, but it was bound to tell.

"There, 'at home, sweet home,' we marked his generosity—so unstinted that scarce anyone appealed in vain—unless, indeed, he himself, just then, was as poor as the applicant, by reason of his constant giving. There we saw the daily, hourly piety, so natural and unconstrained—the trustful confidence in God—the humility which ever spake in praise of others, but never in his own.

"What a lesson, too, was his unwearying activity. I never knew him waste a moment. His geniality and humour brightened a home over which the cloud of sickness so often hung. Not even 'midst my tears can I obliterate the recollection of his wit and fun; nor do I wish to, for these were consecrated too—the man himself was God's."

On several occasions Mrs. Spurgeon has given me the privilege of speaking in her home; once Mr. Fullerton joined me. The study has always been chosen as the place for the meetings, for the Lord Jesus always gets the best place in her home. I have felt no greater honour could have been conferred on me than to stand on the spot where the world's preacher used to sit to study, and to be allowed there to lift my feeble voice for my Master, supported by the queenly Pastor's wife, who led our praise at the piano.

CHAPTER XXIII.

By the Margin of the Blue Sea.

MENTON and Mr. Spurgeon will be two names always associated the one with the other. Indeed, in some sense, Mr. Spurgeon made Menton, so many visitors flocked there because of his presence.

For quite a number of winters he has sojourned in that quiet nook by the margin of the blue Mediterranean, sheltered by the Alpes Maritimes from the cruel north wind.

In former years, the little morning service which he conducted in his room was greatly appreciated by the Christian people who were wintering in Menton: sometimes he would have as many as sixty crowding to take part in it. He simply expounded a passage of Scripture and led in prayer, but blessing large and lasting rested on this quiet ministry. Two years ago he read through the Gospel according to Matthew in this way, and the last weeks of his life were spent in revising the Commentary which was the outcome of these talks, and which is yet to be published as a posthumous work.

After his severe illness in the summer of 1891, Mrs. Spurgeon was able to accompany her beloved husband to the sunny South, and his delight was great

in taking her to his various resorts and pointing out the beauties of the place to her.

About three weeks before his death he was driving in the suburbs of Menton with Mr. Allison and his private secretary, when a telegraph messenger met them along the road, and announced that he had a telegram for Mr. Spurgeon. Mr. Harrald opened it, and read its contents aloud. It was from their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales, thanking him for his message of sympathy in reference to the loss of the Duke of Clarence.

Mr. Harrald folded it up; he said, "I will put that into my pocket, and take care of it."

Mr. Spurgeon, who seemed very much cheered to receive such a mark of respect, said :—

"No, you won't, I will take care of that myself"; and he placed it into his own pocket—there it remained until he passed away.

To mourn over the loss of such a life would be almost a sin. We cannot help weeping, but we dare not murmur; for his end was so beautiful. I cannot describe the feelings which follow his final withdrawal from our midst better than my faithful colleague has done in the preface of the Memorial Volume, *From the Pulpit to the Palm-Branch.*

"Since this good gift was to be taken from us, we are constrained to say that he could have gone from our midst in no better way. This is not only a matter of faith, but, having tried to imagine other methods of departure, we are compelled to fall back on God's way as the wisest and best.

"Had Mr. Spurgeon been called suddenly, we should have been so stunned by the blow as to have been

scarcely able to stand upright beneath it; a waiting time was, therefore, in mercy, granted to us, during which the forces at command were organized in such a way that, with the exactness of a machine, all worked smoothly when the terrible tidings at last came.

MR. SPURGEON AND MR. HARRALD BY THE SEA.

"Had Mr. Spurgeon been taken before such marvellous solicitude was shown around his sick bed, the enemies of the truth would have blasphemed; now

they are fain to be silent, seeing that even in this life, fidelity to the truth, and faithfulness to conviction have been so greatly honoured.

"Had Mr. Spurgeon passed away amid the fogs of London, we should have imagined that, had he only been permitted to live beneath bluer skies, his life would have been prolonged; now we thank God that those three bright months were added to it, and that he was able, with his beloved wife, to have such uninterrupted joy on earth, ere he passed to his reward in heaven."

A little while before the end, Dr. Harwood Pattison received a post card from Menton, of which he justly remarks "that for beauty of thought and expression, it seems worthy to rank with the best specimen of English letter-writing,

"DEAR FRIEND,—The best of years be unto you. Your card was very sweet. I am very ill, weary and low; but yet I am in such tender hands that I am by no means unhappy. 'Let Him do as seemeth Him good.'

"I am, indeed, favoured with the kind opinion of my brethren. I pray to be more worthy of the honour of their love.

"I am glad of the love of yourself and your father, who seems to me to be growing out on his Western side—all good things go that way. It will be no ill day for me when I go, in a fuller sense, to the land of the setting sun.

"Yours, ever, most heartily,

"C. H. SPURGEON."

Truly, it was no ill day for him, when he entered that land of everlasting rest, and left the margin of the blue sea for the sea of glass mingled with fire.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Sea of Glass mingled with Fire.

ON the 31st day of January, 1892, just about thirty-eight years after the call to New Park Street, Mr. Spurgeon, who had caused such a stir from the centre to the circumference of the world, lay breathing his last breath during the solemn midnight in a quiet little chamber in the Hôtel Beau Rivage, Menton. His devoted wife and a few friends stood around his bed, while outside in the night wind the palm trees were waving their branches as if in token of victory. Truly a conqueror, through Christ, passed away that night.

On the following morning a little company again stood in the room, among whom were his much beloved deacon, Mr. Allison, his devoted "armour-bearer," Mr. Harrald, my old College companion, Mr. Samuels, of Birmingham, and my friend Mr. Mackenzie, who had rendered Mr. Spurgeon some little assistance with his camera during the closing weeks, and others.

My friend told me that as he fell upon his knees in that strange land, and kissed the cold forehead, he fervently lifted his heart to God in gratitude for the blessing he had received as a young man, in London, many years before, through those lips which were now

silent. He had never told Mr. Spurgeon that he was converted through him, but in the presence of death his heart overflowed.

A MORNING WALK AT MENTON.

No sooner had the spirit fled than the electric wire flashed the news all round the globe that "our beloved Pastor had entered heaven." The little

post-office at Menton soon became blocked by hundreds of messages of sympathy arriving from all parts of the land, and sent by all ranks of society. The Prince and Princess of Wales sent a telegram to the bereaved widow, and after Mrs. Spurgeon's return to England, the Princess of Wales, who had gone to Menton, made further sympathetic inquiries concerning her, and said that, while she was sitting at the dying bed of her beloved son, the Duke of Clarence, at Sandringham, he made frequent references to Mr. Spurgeon.

When the news of his son's departure was conveyed to Mr. Spurgeon's father, the venerable gentleman bore the intelligence of the sad event with the greatest fortitude, and his first observation was, "Oh, what a blessed meeting that must have been between Charles and his dear mother!"

To carry out the express wish of his many friends at home, the body was brought to England for interment, and thus thousands, who had been blessed by his life, were enabled to pay a last tribute of respect at his burial.

After being embalmed, the body was placed in a beautiful Olive Casket, which was covered with splendid palm branches sent by Mrs. Spurgeon.

Amid the tears of many friends in France, a Memorial Service was held in the Presbyterian Church at Menton, and from thence it was conveyed to England, where it was received by his loving Church Officers and friends, and conveyed to the scene of his marvellous ministry.

Memorial services were held in the great Tabernacle, with the Olive Casket canopied by beautiful

palm branches, sent from the place where the Victor fell, lying in front of the Preacher's platform. On the top of the Olive Casket lay this faithful soldier's two-edged sword, which he so manfully wielded for so many years. It was opened at the Book of Isaiah, and a plain ribbon marked the passage which cut right into the Essex lad's heart on that memorable Sunday morning.

Some 60,000 persons walked through the Tabernacle in one short day to view the coffin, and the crowds at his funeral were great beyond expectation. The respect and honour paid to Mr. Spurgeon's memory, as the body was borne to its last resting-place, no pen can fully describe.

If you have ever seen Her Majesty the Queen open Parliament in person, you may form some idea of the crowds that gathered along the route. Hundreds of policemen were needed to regulate the throng. The shops were all closed for miles. Even the public-houses acknowledged his sterling worth by having black shutters put up at their windows.

The line of carriages which conveyed the mourners formed a procession for miles, and as we passed the Stockwell Orphanage the sight was a most touching one. The dear orphan children were dressed in black, and wished to pay homage to their departed benefactor and friend by singing a hymn, as the hearse, carrying his body, slowly passed the gates. But the tears and sobs checked the singing, and to see those dear little children, broken-hearted, told how much he was beloved by the Fatherless he had so befriended.

Dr. Pierson spoke wonderful words in the Taber-

nacle, and Pastor Archibald Brown touched all hearts by his tender utterances at the grave.

Thus, in the presence of many thousands of true-hearted friends, from every part of the world, all that was mortal of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, was borne to its resting-place at Norwood Cemetery, and a plain slab with his name upon it marks the spot where he awaits the resurrection of the blessed.

THE OLIVE-CASKET BENEATH THE PALM-BRANCHES.

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The Essex lad who became

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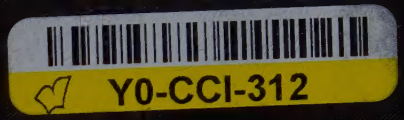
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